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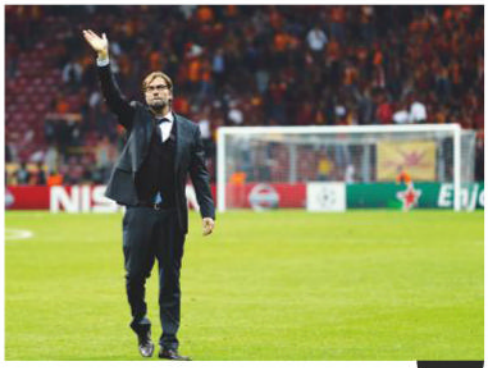

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The global game caught on camera

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SPFC
PENA

QATAR...Lekhwiya's Chico Flores (right) confronts Faisel Darwish of Saudi Arabia's Al Hilal during their AFC Champions League quarter-final

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SPAIN...Barcelona's Luis Suarez celebrates scoring at home to Bayer Leverkusen in the Champions League

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SUDAN...a colourful fan of Congo's TP Mazembe climbs the fence during their African Champions League semi-final against Al Merreikh

PORTUGAL...Porto fans light flares through a hole in a large banner at their home game against Benfica

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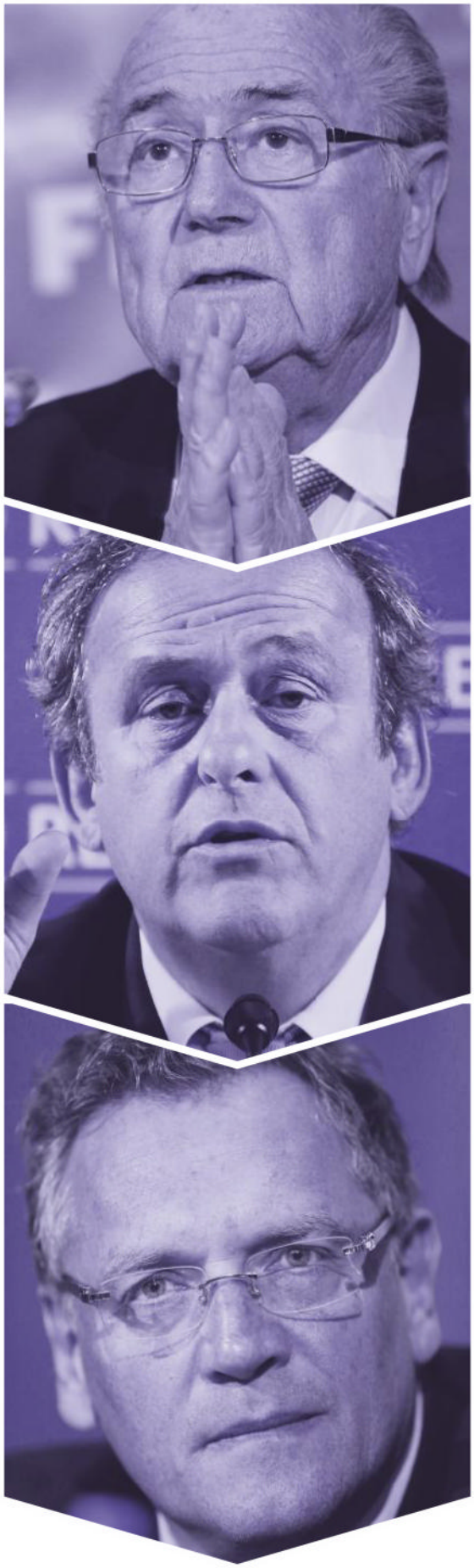


Going... going... gone

The net is tightening around the movers and shakers of world football as the FIFA corruption scandal gathers momentum

By Keir Radnedge

Michel Platini shambled in for his press conference. He smiled, laughed and joked with his UEFA general-secretary, Gianni Infantino, and his media minder, former CNN sports reporter Pedro Pinto, and sat down to face a throng of cameras and reporters. All were poised for "the news".

A month earlier, Platini had been first out of the blocks to declare his pursuit of the presidency of FIFA, writing to all the world's national associations nine days after the executive committee had set the election for February 26.

Now, at the Grimaldi Forum conference centre, staring out at the Mediterranean in Monte Carlo, the French president of UEFA had cleared the decks. The previous day the Champions League group draw had been undertaken; this morning it had been the turn of the Europa League. Now, with all the club business out of the way, it was time to talk of the UEFA president's world ambitions.

A fortnight earlier a leak had suggested Platini would use the occasion to launch his manifesto. This, it was understood, was no longer the plan. But at least Platini was here to talk, to front up, to explain why the 209 national associations should vote for him; why he was the right man to pull FIFA out of the corruption-stained, reputation-muddied mire. Except that speaking up was not on his agenda.

As Platini glowed with mischievous satisfaction so Pinto explained that this was a UEFA occasion and FIFA was off limits. There is nothing journalists hate as much as being told they cannot ask questions of a particular subject. It raises hackles and guarantees a bad press. Various reporters from the UK, France, Germany and Italy tried to tease him out. Each time Platini smiled and demurred.

House of deception...FIFA headquarters in Zurich

Just before the end, with his audience seething, Platini apologised for his "FIFA silence". Too late. Just as managers are said to have "lost the dressing room", so Platini had lost the media.

It was a communications faux pas which has come back not only to bite him but to bite him hard.

Over the last weeks, as a three-cornered net has been drawn gradually ever tighter – by the Swiss attorney-general, by the United States Department of Justice and even by the FIFA Independent Ethics Committee – so the customary poise of Platini and FIFA president Sepp Blatter has faded as they have wriggled and squirmed and fallen back on the fragile status of their respective presidencies.

Blatter had cut loose his secretary-general, Jerome Valcke, on the hearsay word of a ticket tout with a grudge to bear; and Platini, within the FIFA maelstrom,

could not turn to his right for Infantino to wave a magic wand and come up, Baldrick-like, with another cunning plan.

The origins of the crisis go back to the presidential era of Brazil's Joao Havelange. In the late 1970s, in partnership with German sportswear magnate Horst Dassler and British super-salesman Patrick Nally, he created the system which now provides the financial platform for all of high-profile world sport: selling event-partnership exclusivity to both sponsors and broadcasters.

An ongoing expansion of the World Cup, together with the aggressively pursued rights market and the revenue stream, proved magnetic for not only sports administrators with vision and ideals but also men – and it was only men back then – who saw football as a new kingdom of power, patronage and money.

These were, remember, the years when the credo of "greed is good" swept the western political world and from which there was to be no going back. Football was swept along, sometimes even appearing to lead the way.

By the time Havelange approached the end of his reign in the 1990s, the power structure had been turned on its head. Europe might have generated the most money but the "one member, one vote" system handed power to Africa, Asia and CONCACAF (the region of the Caribbean, and central and north America). When Blatter assumed the presidency in 1998, the political system of FIFA had already been corrupted by events from within.

> "This investigation will take much more than the legendary 90 minutes. We are not even near half-time."
> **Michael Lauber, Swiss attorney-general**

Blatter traded guaranteed support when needed against giving Mohamed Bin Hammam and Jack Warner a free hand to run their Asian and CONCACAF empires as they wished. However, the apparent power of the FIFA president extended only as far as the door out of the ExCo chamber. Hence, over the years, a grisly cast of characters rose to power, with no term or age limit restrictions.

Many enriched themselves in their leader's slipstream, as the US Department of Justice indictment – a tip of the iceberg document – illustrates.

Where was Blatter in all of this? No suggestion of illicit financial gain has ever been directed at him. Despite his own insistence on keeping his pay grade secret, he enjoys an opulent lifestyle. But, by and large, Blatter's life has been FIFA.

"First one in to open the post, last one to turn out the lights" was how his commitment as general-secretary was described by his staff back then. Becoming president brought no change and Blatter's "wealth" has to be measured simply in terms of power.

Much to ponder... Platini's poise has faded in recent weeks

All in all, it is an exemplary illustration of the veracity of the historian Lord Acton's dictum: "Power corrupts, absolute power corrupts absolutely".

The machinery of FIFA had been corrupted long before Loretta Lynch and Michael Lauber, the respective attorney-generals of the United States and Switzerland, pounced on May 27, 2015. This is why ultimate reform of the world football federation must deal not only with people but with structures. Whether anyone really has the guts to drive that agenda remains open to doubt. The vast majority of FIFA's current power brokers, clearly, do not.

It's an old story, but understanding the roots is essential to an understanding of the current crisis.

The tipping point was the decision in late 2007 to run bidding for the 2018 and 2022 World Cups simultaneously. Putting successive events out to tender was not unique, many international sports do it, but none has the financial clout of football nor such a deep-rooted corruption.

Seeking the truth... Swiss and US attorney-generals Michael Lauber and Loretta Lynch

A most enthusiastic supporter of the twin-bid process was Chuck Blazer. The American was CONCACAF general-secretary and Warner's loyal partner in skulduggery, but even more important he chaired FIFA's TV and marketing committee. Not far behind in terms of enthusiasm were finance chair Julio Grondona, Warner himself and Jerome Valcke, newly returned to FIFA as secretary-general after a previous controversial stint as head of FIFA marketing.

The scandal-ridden bid process hit a climax – or nadir – with the ExCo votes on December 2, 2010, which rewarded Russia and Qatar. Blatter was furious. He had wanted Russia and the United States, with football uniting the two old super powers. Suddenly, he saw his ultimate dream of a Nobel Peace Prize vanishing over the horizon.

Blazer, furious with Warner at having backed Qatar against the USA, took revenge by blowing the whistle on the Caribbean cash scandal. In so doing he also betrayed himself. When ex-Barbados Chief Justice Sir David Simmons opened the books, the staggering extent to which Warner and Blazer had enriched themselves became clear.

Enter the Feds: the first corner of the net. The Inland Revenue Service shared their concerns with the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Warner's sons Daryan and Daryll, both of whom had enriched themselves on daddy's "business" and resident in Miami, were reeled in. So was the corpulent Blazer while riding his

disability buggy up through Manhattan. In mitigation they owned up and laid bare the facts and figures of a $150million scam. Right in their line of fire were CONCACAF, South America's CONMEBOL and marketing agencies such as the US subsidiaries of Brazilian billionaire Jose Hawilla's Traffic.

Back in Switzerland, where international sports federations in general and FIFA in particular, had been granted an easy life by the authorities and laws of confidentiality, so politicians had grown weary of the scandal-ridden headlines. Action was needed or, at least, the pretence of action. What jolted the Office of the Attorney-General to life was a specific request from the US Department of Justice.

So, on May 27, Swiss police swooped on the luxury Baur au Lac Hotel in Zurich and detained seven senior football executives including two serving FIFA vice-presidents in Cayman Islands' Jeffrey Webb (CONCACAF) and Uruguay's Eugenio Figueredo (outgoing CONMEBOL leader).

Later that day US attorney-general Lynch and senior law-enforcement colleagues opened up the FIFAGate files, published the indictment and revealed the extent of cooperation from Blazer, the Warner boys and Traffic Sports USA.

Meanwhile the Swiss, keen not to be shown up by the Americans and already in possession of the 2018-2022 World Cup bid inquiry run by Michael Garcia – the departed FIFA ethics investigator – undertook the first of several raids of FIFA headquarters in which they seized documents and data records. Later, luxury apartments in western Switzerland were seized amid suspicion of money laundering and orders went out to the banks to check out suspicious transactions involving hundreds of accounts.

Swoop...the beginning of the end

Lauber, needing to be seen to be acting, staged another "show" on September 25. He and his investigators swept into FIFA HQ during an ExCo gathering and confronted Blatter and Platini for interrogation. Platini, apparently "cocky" during the meeting, was the more shocked.

Later it was announced that a criminal investigation had been opened against Blatter regarding an under-valued sale of World Cup TV rights to Warner and a "'disloyal payment" of 2m Swiss francs to Platini in February 2011. Platini himself was assessed later by Lauber as being "something between a witness and an accused".

> "I am aware that these events may harm my image and my reputation and the image of UEFA"
>
> **Michel Platini**

Eleven days earlier, Lauber and Lynch had attended an international prosecutors' conference in Zurich. Lynch promised another wave of arrests while Lauber warned against expecting any short-term results from his enquiries. "Our investigation is not even at half-time," he said.

The third body involved in pulling the net tighter was FIFA's ethics committee. Having been created by FIFA ensured it was a mixture of caution and suspicion. Certainly the manner in which Garcia flounced out last year after a clash of legal cultures with the conservative German judge Hans-Joachim Eckert damaged its credibility.

But former assistant and successor Cornel Borbely appears set on pursuit and is on the same "legal culture" wavelength as Eckert. He and Eckert combined to enact the suspension of the "Zurich Seven" on the day they were detained and, late in September, Eckert also banned Warner for life. Coming four years after Warner walked out on football after the Port of Spain scandal, this appeared odd timing. In

FIFAGATE...AS IT HAPPENED

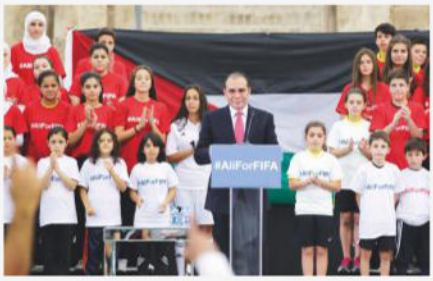
SEPTEMBER 1
ZURICH: Thomas Renggli, author of the 'Platini smear' article, resigns from FIFA staff.

SEPTEMBER 2
BERNE: FIFA's new reform committee meets for the first time under the chairmanship of Francois Carrard, former director-general of the International Olympic Committee.
NIGERIA: EX-Nigeria

captain Segun Odegbami (above) announces he will campaign to become FIFA president.
SEOUL: Chung Mong-joon accuses the Asian Football Confederation of undermining the presidential election process by suggesting its members' support Michel Platini.

SEPTEMBER 9
JORDAN: Prince Ali bin Al Hussein, former FIFA vice-president, (right) announces his intention to stand for the presidency.

SEPTEMBER 12
ZURICH: Swiss television publishes



allegations suggested Sepp Blatter sold 2010 and 2014 World Cup TV rights to Jack Warner at a bargain $600,000, from which the latter made a $15m profit.

SEPTEMBER 14
ZURICH: United States attorney-general Loretta Lynch says she expects more arrests in the FIFAGate investigation. Swiss counterpart Michael Lauber says property has been seized in his own department's probe into 2018-2022 World Cup awards.

SEPTEMBER 17
BERNE: Swiss authorities rule that former FIFA vice-president Eugenio Figueredo should be

Under fire...Sepp Blatter, Michel Platini and Jerome Valcke

VANISHING POINT

Marco Polo Del Nero, president of the Brazilian confederation, has not attended an ExCo meeting since spring of last year. He dare not leave Brazil for fear of arrest on information arising from the US DoJ's FIFAGate investigation. Officially, inexplicably, he remains chairman of FIFA's Olympic football committee for Rio 2016.

fact, Eckert was tidying up loose ends. He, Borbely and their fellow committee members had bigger fish to consider.

One was Valcke, who had been referred to the ethics committee by FIFA itself after his suspension following the tickets deal allegations; a second was Blatter himself, now he had been placed under criminal investigation; and a third was Platini because of the manner of implication over the "disloyal payment".

All the while, other strands in the FIFA saga kept ticking along:

Domenico Scala, independent chairman of the audit and compliance committee and head of the electoral committee, generated an impressively comprehensive set of reform proposals:

Francois Carrard, ex-director-general of the International Olympic Committee, was appointed to chair a committee (composed unhappily of two delegates from each confederation) charged with devising reform proposals to put before the extraordinary elective congress on February 26;

American legal firm Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan was commissioned by FIFA to undertake an independent internal inquiry;

Various contenders for the presidency declared their interest: from heavyweights such as Prince Ali of Jordan (who denied Blatter a first-round knockout in May) and former long-serving FIFA vice-president Chung Mong-joon (South Korea) to no-hopers such as former Brazil star Zico, ex-Nigeria captain Segun Odegbami, Liberia FA chief Musa Bility plus several assorted Nigerian businessmen.

All the while, Platini's star was fading. Having sidestepped the media in Monaco he failed to make an appearance after the next UEFA executive committee meeting. His promised manifesto, containing any views on reform beyond platitudes such

extradited to the US.
MOSCOW: Russian World Cup organisers celebrate a 1,000-days-to-go party in Red Square.
ZURICH: FIFA suspends secretary-general Jerome Valcke and refers him to the ethics committee after allegations – which he denies – that he discussed an illicit World Cup tickets resale deal. Finance director Markus Kattner is appointed in his place.

SEPTEMBER 21
BUENOS AIRES: Father and son Hugo and Mariano Jinkis (right), former heads of marketing company TyC, are released on bail after being charged with money laundering in connection with the FIFAGate investigation.

SEPTEMBER 23
BERNE: Swiss

authorities rule former Venezuelan federation president Rafael Esquivel should be extradited to the US.

SEPTEMBER 24
ZURICH: FIFA agrees to give Swiss investigators access to the emails records of Valcke. Michel Platini says, if elected as president, he would return FIFA's focus from politics to football.

SEPTEMBER 25
ZURICH: A criminal investigation is opened against Blatter, on suspicion of misuse of FIFA rights and funds. Blatter and UEFA president Platini are questioned at the conclusion of an ExCo meeting.

SEPTEMBER 28
NYON: Michel Platini says that his payment of 2m SwFr by FIFA, nine years after he completed his work as counsellor, was entirely correct and above board.

SEPTEMBER 29
ZURICH: Warner (right), Trinidadian ex-FIFA vice-president and former head of CONCACAF, is belatedly suspended for life by FIFA, four years after quitting.
NYON: Platini now claims that his payment delay was due to FIFA's earlier financial problems.

as "making FIFA more about football and less about politics" remained hidden.

Indeed, delaying its launch so long proved yet another communications gaffe. Questions about the 2m Swiss francs payment rather than FIFA's future would be guaranteed to dominate the press conference at any manifesto declaration.

Platini had justified the payment as being a fourth instalment for his duties as Blatter's "football counsellor" between 1999 and 2002. His work was not in dispute; his was the unified international calendar, a valuable undertaking. But initially he failed to address the reason for the nine-year delay in payment. Eventually Platini said it was because of FIFA's financial problems back in 2002.

The explanation was greeted with derision. How could anyone let such a debt drift for so long, especially when due from the richest organisation in world sport? Certainly FIFA, after the ISL crash, had been financially embarrassed in 2002. But aggressive selling of World Cup rights soon resolved that.

Time for change... South Korea's Chung Mong-joon throws his hat into the FIFA presidency ring

Platini's steady retreat from media engagements over the previous two years had created an irritation and impatience evolving into lack of respect.

The French media, which had worshipped him understandably ever since his days of glory, began to grow sceptical. *France Football* led the way two years ago by investigating Platini's role in the Qatar World Cup award. Suspicions grew that he had succumbed to pressure from the president, Nicolas Sarkozy, to switch support from the US (another reason for his well-publicised schism with Blatter).

When Platini could not explain satisfactorily the nine-year delay in the 2m payment even loyal *L'Equipe* began to lose faith. That the payment had been made two months after the Qatar and just before decided not to contest Blatter's FIFA re-election fuelled the fire of suspicion.

From every direction the net was tightening around the men who have long commanded world football. FIFA's fall had been terrible.

Matters can only get worse before they stand any hope of getting better. WS

Candidate...Zico

Valcke: Marketing guru finally comes a cropper

The tale is whispered around the corridors of the home of FIFA that, every day since the May 27 arrests in Zurich, Jerome Valcke has risen at his luxury home in Wollerau at 5.30am to prepare to face the day. He reasons that, under Swiss law, investigators cannot deliver the dreaded knock on the door before 6am. Valcke wants to be ready, just in case.

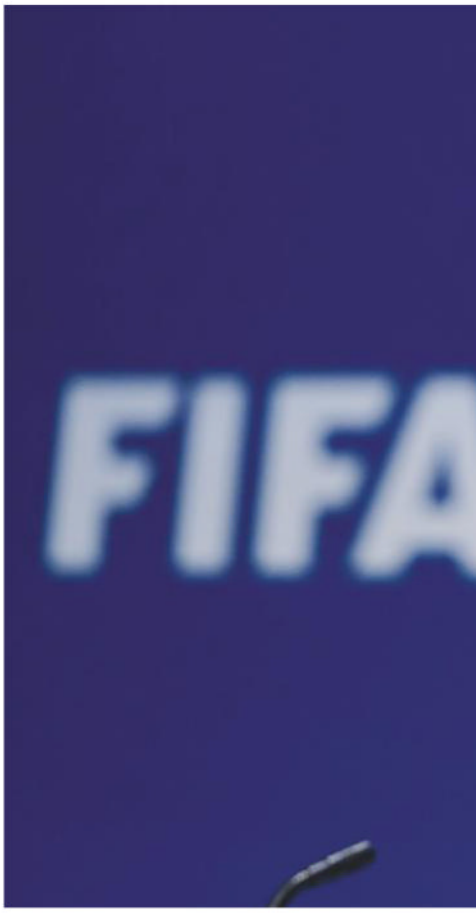
Of course, the story may be apocryphal, but it sums up the style of the 54-year-old Frenchman and the impression delivered down his eight years as FIFA secretary-general that this was a man with his fingers on all the right buttons, whatever the eventuality.

This has not quite always been the case. Every now and again the pent-up frustrations of events would spark Valcke into a flash of angry impatience. The most infamous was his impromptu observation that the Brazilian World Cup organisers needed "a kick up the backside".

In the run-up to Brazil 2014 Valcke also mused that there was a lot to be said for dictatorships, as in Russia, and was hammered again. In an email to Jack Warner he once referred to how Qatar had "bought the World Cup" – and had to wriggle out of it as a reference on the Gulf state's vast promotional expenditure.

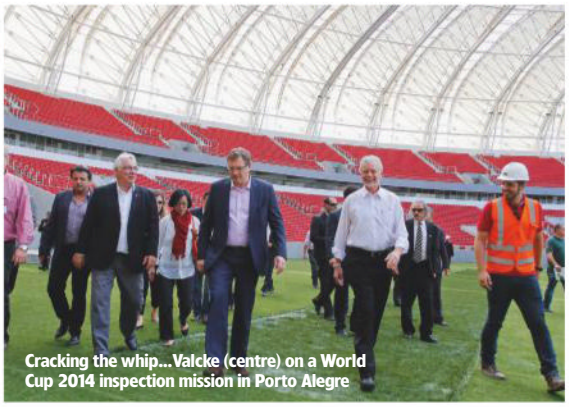
Mostly Valcke managed to turn all such embarrassments around as he side-stepped his way up the ladder of marketing and sporting power.

It worked – or, at least, it did until September 17 when his Moscow-bound charter plane was turned around and routed back to Zurich for the showdown which brought about his suspension from a job he was already preparing to leave next spring.



Valcke had started out professionally in TV journalism, but reading late-night news bulletins and commenting on skiing in the mid-1980s with the subscription *Canal+* was not his metier. Rather, it was Valcke's commercial nous which helped persuade owner Pierre Lescure to create a subsidiary, *Sport+*, to work in the embryonic new world of TV sports rights. His timing was perfect, at the start of the satellite and cable TV revolution. Foreign football, boxing, NBA basketball, whatever, wherever – Valcke and *Sport+* were first in line for purchase and resale.

In June 2003, came the call from Blatter and FIFA. Valcke was ideal for the job. He was poacher turned gamekeeper; the man who knew the prices, knew the market and knew how to negotiate the most inflationary deals.



Cracking the whip...Valcke (centre) on a World Cup 2014 inspection mission in Porto Alegre

Valcke rapidly built up the federation's commercial portfolio. But three years later he flew too near the commercial sun. Valcke negotiated in secret to bring Visa on board as the World Cup's finance sector sponsor without observing a

Food for thought... Valcke is alleged to have been part of an illegal World Cup tickets agreement

contractual stipulation to offer MasterCard a renegotiation and extension option.

MasterCard sued and Valcke endured what he later described as the worst time of his life squirming in the witness box in a New York court. Judge Loretta Preska ruled FIFA's negotiators – meaning, in the main, Valcke – had lied to both companies and that the Visa deal should be frozen.

Five days later FIFA "parted company" with Valcke and three of his staff. The following June FIFA reached a $90million settlement with MasterCard and brought Visa on board.

In July 2007, to all-round surprise, Valcke was appointed general secretary of FIFA in succession to the unpopular Urs Linsi (the title would be turned around in due course to the more grand "secretary-general", in the style of the United Nations).

Speculation began flying that Valcke, in an early delve into FIFA's business back in 2001, had learned about activities which needed to remain confidential and this was his "power" over Blatter. Valcke has always denied any such leverage. That denial is supported by his very suspension but the rumour illustrated doubts about Valcke's qualifications for the job.

The task of FIFA general-secretary is a tough one. It involves running the administration, balancing the political rivalries of the confederations, enforcing order among federations often riven by internal warfare and government mischief, and ensuring that the World Cup host is up to speed with preparations.

The latter task was the most testing for Valcke. He had to bully local organisers for both South Africa 2010 and Brazil 2014 every step of the way. If those World Cups took place on time, and the preparatory travails are largely forgotten, the majority of the credit is due to Valcke.

Every month he would fly out for a week's whistle-stop review trip. To manage that and keep his fingers on the rest of the FIFA business was a minor miracle.

Then came the fateful moment when Valcke's flight to Moscow was turned around somewhere over Belarus.

Already relations between Valcke and FIFA had soured. He had been implicated in effecting the transfer of $10m from a South Africa World Cup account to Jack Warner's mythical "African diaspora" in the Caribbean; he had counted the heads and concluded that a presidential run would be in vain; so he had been negotiating the terms of his departure.

Valcke himself had conceded publicly a new president would want his own secretary-general. At the World Cup draw in St Petersburg in July he appeared almost demob happy.

Negotiations collapsed. Not so much over several millions due for the remaining three years of his contract but over legal indemnities.

On top of that, an Israeli-American named Benny Alon delivered a media seminar alleging Valcke had reneged on an illicit World Cup tickets agreement which would have netted both men millions of dollars. Alon suggested Valcke intimated this would be his "pension fund".

> "You make a marketing man FIFA's secretary-general. What else do you expect?"
>
> **A Russian World Cup 2018 bid official on Valcke**

Valcke's lawyers issued furious denials but by then Alon, golfing and skiing pal of Michel Platini, was on a flight back to Arizona. The horse had bolted, the FIFA stable door had shut and Valcke was out in the cold, "relieved of his duties" and referred to the ethics committee.

Mystery remains as to why Valcke, already vastly wealthy and powerful, should have become directly involved personally in such ticket resale discussions.

Certainly, Blatter had no reservation in removing the man who had propped him for eight years. Under FIFA statutes the hiring and firing of the secretary-general is an issue for the president with the approval of the ExCo. Blatter moved quickly after receiving support from the six confederation presidents who comprise the emergency committee.

For Valcke this is not the first career setback, which may help him to view events philosophically. He may even be half-pleased that he was already on the outside before the Swiss Attorney-General walked in on Blatter and Platini. **WS**

WHAT NEXT?

OCTOBER 26: Deadline for nominations for the FIFA presidency. Candidates must have the written support of at least five federations plus a track record of two years' direct football involvement in the last five years. They must also be approved as "fit and proper persons" by the Ethics Chamber.

DECEMBER: ExCo meet to agree the agenda for the extraordinary congress and a package of reform proposals. It was scheduled for Tokyo but reverts to Zurich because Blatter fears arrest if he leaves Switzerland – from which, as a Swiss citizen, he cannot be extradited.

JANUARY 11: FIFA Gala in Zurich. Who wants the Presidential Award this time around?

FEBRUARY 26: The Extraordinary Elective Congress to choose a new president.

FROM THE EDITOR

Another month, another meltdown at FIFA. The latest crisis (see page 10) is the most serious yet. The corrupting culture that has enveloped the organisation under Sepp Blatter's leadership has claimed its biggest scalps in Jerome Valcke's suspension and the end, it seems, of Michel Platini's presidential ambitions. And yet, even though Blatter is the subject of a criminal investigation by the Swiss authorities, he could still be the last man standing when FIFA members meet to elect a new president in February.

It often feels like "Groundhog Day" in the *World Soccer* office, such has been the succession of repeat offenders at FIFA. But it bears repeating that true reform will only be achieved when Blatter leaves FIFA for good.

> It bears repeating that true reform will only be achieved when Blatter leaves FIFA for good

While his lawyers may try their best to ensure that does not happen, the wider football community needs to broaden the debate on a post-Blatter FIFA. Surely it is time to discuss relocating FIFA away from Switzerland, a country whose secretive laws have covered up FIFA's indiscretions for too long.

Also this month, we begin our countdown to Euro 2016 in earnest. With the expansion of the finals to 24 teams, there will be more content then ever – both in the magazine and online at worldsoccer.com

Gavin Hamilton, Editor

10 SIGNIFICANT EVENTS THIS MONTH

1. Blatter and Platini under investigation in Switzerland ..... page 10
2. Jerome Valcke leaves FIFA ..... page 15
3. German football offers help to refugees ..... page 28
4. Lucien Favre sacked by Monchengladbach ..... page 77
5. Fiorentina top of Serie A for first time since 1999 ..... page 84
6. Aberdeen shake up the Scottish top flight ..... page 34
7. England become the first country to qualify for Euro 2016 ..... page 49
8. Robert Lewandowski hits five goals in nine minutes ..... page 20
9. Ronaldinho released by Fluminense ..... page 17
10. Messi sidelined by knee injury ..... page 21

Banned for life...Jack Warner

SWITZERLAND

Warner banned by FIFA... four years after quitting

Former FIFA vice-president Jack Warner has been banned from football for life by FIFA, even though the 72-year-old Trinidadian quit FIFA four years ago, in 2011.

Warner, the former head of Caribbean and North and Central American football (CONCACAF), is fighting extradition to the United States on corruption charges and denies accepting millions of dollars in bribes.

He committed "many and various acts of misconduct continuously and repeatedly" said a statement from the FIFA ethics committee.

FIFA's ruling follows an investigation into the bidding process for the 2018 and 2022 World Cups, which began looking at Warner's activities in January 2015.

The statement continued: "In his positions as a football official, he was a key player in schemes involving the offer, acceptance and receipt of undisclosed and illegal payments, as well as other money-making schemes."

Warner responded by blaming the current crisis at FIFA for the ban. "I do not believe however that this will serve as the distraction to FIFA's present problems as FIFA wishes it to be," he said. "Given what is happening in Zurich with Blatter I wish to say that there is no such thing as coincidence."

"It's like choosing between white truffles and caviar"

Luis Figo takes the gastronomic option when asked to say who is the better player: Cristiano Ronaldo or Lionel Messi

BRAZIL

Ronaldinho leaves Fluminense

Former World Player of the Year Ronaldinho has left Fluminense after just nine appearances in three months for the Rio de Janeiro club.

The 35-year-old former Barcelona star signed a one-and-a-half year deal with the club in July, but during his short spell back in his homeland he failed to score or provide any assists. He was even booed by his own fans during a defeat to Atletico Mineiro in the Brazilian championship.

Gone...ex-world player of the year Ronaldinho

A statement posted on the club's website read: "Fluminense hereby announces the end of the contract with Ronaldinho amicably and in mutual agreement between the parties. Fluminense and Ronaldinho retain close ties and plan to work on other projects in the future.

"It should be noted that the player's hiring met all expectations with regarding to marketing returns, increasing ticket and shirt sales for the club as well as attracting a number of partners. Ronaldinho's recruitment also showed that Fluminense are capable of attracting the greatest players in world football."

Booed...Ronaldinho was abused by fans during a game

HEROES & VILLAINS

MATTEO VITAIOLI

Scored San Marino's first away goal in a competitive game for 14 years when he found the net in a 2-1 defeat to Lithuania in a Euro Championship qualifier.

Long wait...Matteo Vitaioli scored in Lithiania

CRISTIANO RONALDO

Scored five goals for Real Madrid in a 6-0 win in La Liga against Espanyol to overtake, by two, Raul's club record of 228 goals. He then followed that up with a hat-trick three days later in the Champions League win at home to Shakhtar Donetsk.

FRANCESCO TOTTI

The 38-year-old Roma forward became the first player in Italian football history to score 300 goals for one club.

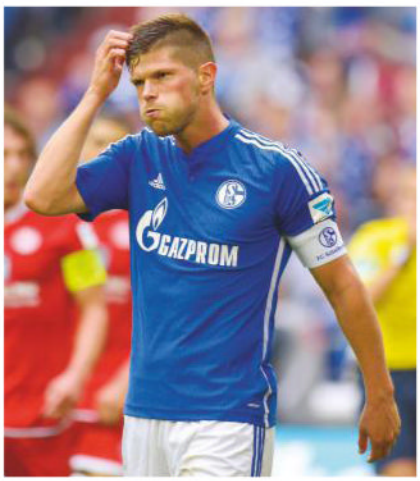
SIMON DAWKINS

After losing 3-2 in the home leg of their third round knockout game to Nicaragua, Gold Cup finalists Jamaica were heading out of the World Cup. Even after an early goal in the return they were going out on away goals – until the Derby County striker netted with just 112 seconds remaining to win the game 4-3 on aggregate.

Late show...Simon Dawkins is mobbed by team-mates

JORDAN MCMILLAN

Partick Thistle's former defender was banned for two years following a failed drug test, after testing positive for benzoylecgonine, a metabolite found in cocaine, following the Scottish Premiership game against Celtic last December.



Spot of bother...Klaas-Jan Huntelaar of Schalke

KLAAS-JAN HUNTELAAR

Schalke's Dutch striker missed his fourth penalty in succession in the Bundesliga and now shares the record for consecutive spot-kick misses with Bruno Labaddia, Marko Pantelic and Nuri Sahin.

FELIPE

The Hanover defender became the first Bundesliga player in over a decade to concede two penalties and score an own goal all in the same game. He achieved this unwanted feat in the 4-2 home defeat to Borussia Dortmund.

MAHDI TOUTOUNCHI

The Iranian sports journalist refused to let his wife, Niloufar Ardalan, who is captain of Iran's women's team, compete in the Asian Football Federation Futsal Championship because he wanted her to be at home for their son's first day at school.

No go...Niloufar Ardalan was not allowed to travel

"I cannot affirm that Platini is corrupt. But the way he's run UEFA hasn't been the best. He's from the same school as Blatter"

Straight talking from striker turned politican Romario

GOALS we'd like to see again

To see video footage of these goals, and many more that we have selected, scan the QR code using any free QR reader that can be downloaded to your smartphone. You can also see the videos by logging on to http://po.st/ZBkSye

1 SERGIO AGUERO
Argentina v Bolivia
Exchanges passes twice with Roberto Pereyra before chipping the goalkeeper from the right side of the penalty area.

2 ALDO KALULU
Lyon v Bastia
Steed Malbranque splits the Bastia defence with a delightful pass that the 19-year-old runs on to and then flicks over the advancing goalkeeper before tapping into the net on the volley for his first goal in Ligue 1.

3 MAURICIO PINILLA
Atalanta v Sassuolo
Produces a spectacular overhead kick at the far post to fire home a cross from Alejandro Gomez.

4 FABIAN LUSTENBERGER
Hertha Berlin v Stuttgart
Strikes a powerful mid-air volley from outside the penalty area into the top corner.

5 JULIEN FERET
Caen v Troyes
A perfectly chipped pass from Ronny Rodelin is dinked over the goalkeeper, on the volley.

6 GIOVANNI SIMEONE
Banfield v Crucero del Norte
A wonderful team goal – full of crisp, one-touch passes – that is finished off by the 20-year-old striker.

WINNERS

QATAR
Chalked up the country's biggest-ever victory as they beat Bhutan 15-0 in a World Cup qualifier.

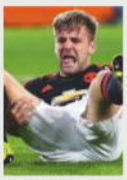
ABERDEEN
Eight wins from their first eight league games gave the Dons their best-ever start to a season and they went into October top of the Scottish Premiership.

IKER CASILLAS
Porto's former Real Madrid goalkeeper made a record-breaking 152nd appearance in the Champions League as his side beat Chelsea 2-1.

MALAYSIA
Suffered their heaviest-ever defeat in an international as they lost 10-0 to United Arab Emirates in a World Cup qualifier.

MALAGA
Goalless in their first six La Liga games, they were the last team to find the net in Europe's top five leagues.

LUKE SHAW
A double fracture of the Manchester United full-back's left leg has left his place in England's Euro squad this summer in doubt.



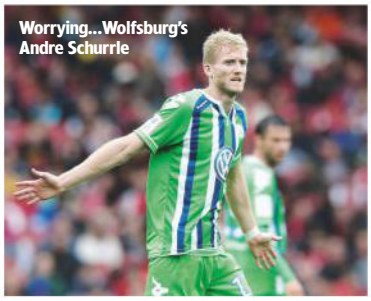
LOSERS

"If you are dating a woman who does not want to respond positively, then you must look for another woman"

Togo coach Tom Saintfiet slams striker Emmanuel Adebayor (right), who failed to turn up for an African Nations Cup qualifier against Djibouti

Notebook

Highlights from some of our regular on-line contributions



Worrying...Wolfsburg's Andre Schurrle

GERMANY

After recently accusing striker Bas Dost of brattish behaviour, Wolfsburg coach Dieter Hecking is now pointing an accusatory finger at Andre Schurrle.

Unhappy with the latter's contribution since arriving from Chelsea in a €33million deal, Hecking announced during a TV talk show that he could no longer protect the German international, and if the striker wanted to remain a first-teamer at the VW club he would have to pull his socks up.

"Andre's been with us for nine months and knows that up to now he has not lived up to expectations. He's asking himself too many questions. He's worrying too much.

"I can see he's trying hard in training, but he has to finally do it on the pitch."

Plain speaking indeed. If only the engineers at VW had been as honest...

Nick Bidwell

SPAIN

Four weeks into the season and the team at the bottom is...Sevilla!

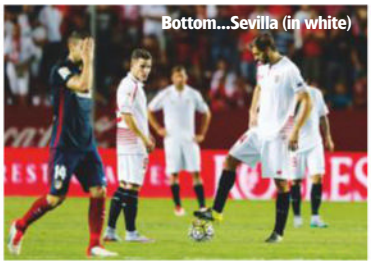
Victorious in their first Champions League game, the Europa League winners have already lost more home games this term than in the whole of last season.

Changes over the summer had an impact of course but the consensus was that they had rebuilt well and no one expected this.

No one is talking crisis yet, there is too much stability and too much belief in sporting director Monchi and coach Unai Emery for that, but it is still concerning and injuries have not helped.

"I don't have the players right now to play Wednesday and Sunday," says Emery.

Sid Lowe



Bottom...Sevilla (in white)

Big crowds...Vasco da Gama fans celebrate

BRAZIL

Midweek, in the 26th round of games in the Brazilian championship, and the tournament had its biggest crowd so far as 67,011 fans turned out to watch Flamengo lose 2-0 to Coritiba.

It is a high point in what, in this sense at least, has been an encouraging campaign. Ticket prices remain controversially high, but average crowds this year have been above 20,000 – the best for some time. This is all the more striking since Brazil has run into an economic recession.

A conclusion can be drawn that, for all its problems, organising last year's World Cup did indeed leave a legacy for Brazilian football. Some of the stadiums always looked to have dubious viability – even CBF director Walter Feldman recently recognised that the most expensive, in Brasilia, was "an excess". But the stadiums in the heartlands are being well used.

And it seems that, despite the disastrous performance of the national team, the World Cup served as an effective advertisement for the stadium experience. This trend was timidly evident last year, and has appeared to have flourished in 2015.

Tim Vickery

ITALY

We have seen it before and we will doubtless see it again as Italy prove themselves less than scintillating in successive 1-0 wins against Malta and Bulgaria to go top of Euro qualifying Group H.

While no serious commentator has ever harboured any real doubts about Italy making it through to these enlarged-numbers Euro finals, there is plenty of concern about the progress – or lack of – made by the *Azzurri* of former Juventus maestro, Antonio Conte, who took charge just one year ago.

Paddy Agnew

Uninspiring...but Italy are set for France 2016

Weekly notes from Brazil, Spain, Germany and Italy at **worldsoccer.com**

"It's the Dutch disease. We thought qualification for Euro 2016 would be simple. We've been arrogant"

Former Holland and PSV goalkeeper Hans Van Breukelen sums up his nation's recent fall from grace

Headliner

Robert Lewandowski

Five goals in nine second-half minutes

For all the superlatives rightly being heaped on Bayern Munich striker Robert Lewandowski following his astonishing five goals in nine minutes against Wolfsburg – the first top-flight quintuple since MSV Duisburg's Michael Tonnies single-handedly destroyed Karlsruher back in 1991 – in terms of Bundesliga history, a "*fünferpack*" is not as uncommon as one might think. No fewer than 11 other players have managed it and between 1972 and 1976, with iconic Bayern centre-forward Gerd Muller doing so on four occasions.

Unstoppable... Lewandowski scores his third against Wolfsburg

Despite Lewandowski's heroics, the double hat-trick Dieter Muller rattled in for Cologne in a 7-2 thrashing of Werder Bremen in August 1977 remains the ultimate act of German top-flight finishing.

Now 61, the once-deadly Dieter was fearing the worst and admits: "As I was watching the FC Bayern-Wolfsburg game, friends were sending me texts and telling me my record was in danger.

"When he [Lewandowski] scored his fifth, there was a good half-hour left and I knew it was going to be tight.

"I was very jittery on my sofa, but it all ended OK. I'm proud that one of the oldest records in the Bundesliga still belongs to me."

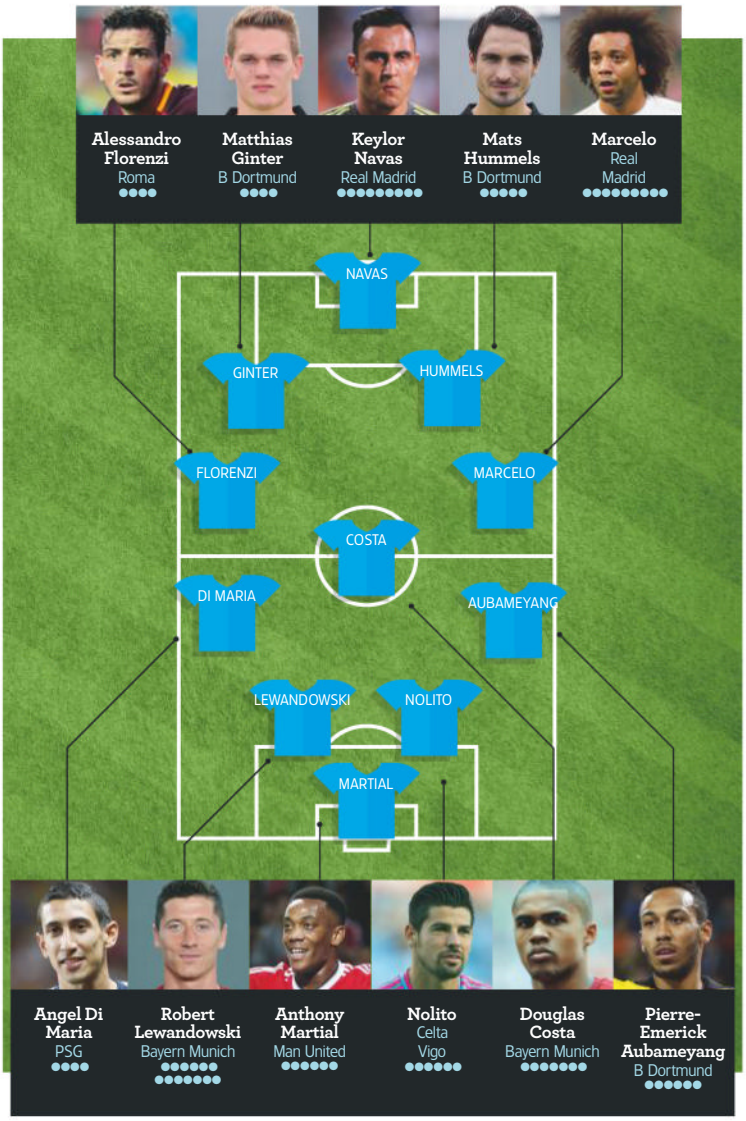
ESM XI SEPTEMBER 2015

Lewandowski tops first ESM poll of the season

The Bayern Munich striker received 13 votes from members of the European Sports Media group in the team of the month for September 2015.

HOW IT WORKS

Every month, journalists from each member of the European Sports Media group select their first XI based on the best individual performances from Europe's top competitions. For details of how each ESM member voted, visit worldsoccer.com/esm11



ESM EUROPEAN SPORTS MEDIA

"No man in the world is worth 50million. We have to be careful in football that we don't lose a grip on reality"

Mesut Ozil (right) on Manchester City signing Kevin De Bruyne

SPAIN

Messi sidelined by knee injury

Concern...Barcelona's club doctor Ricard Pruna (left) treats the injured Lionel Messi

The silence in the Camp Nou was deafening. Lionel Messi was down in the penalty area. A long ball from Sergi Roberto had reached him and, with a single superb touch, he had controlled and dashed past a defender to the edge of the six-yard box where he prepared to shoot. As he did so, Pedro Bigas came across to block. The impact twisted Messi's knee and he went to ground.

Up in the stands, they knew it was probably serious, not least because Messi is not in the habit of going to ground for nothing; still less staying there. But there he was. The game against Las Palmas was only three minutes old.

As team-mates gathered round anxiously, Barcelona's doctor Ricard Pruna looked at Messi's knee, moving it gently from side to side. There was noise now, the fans chanting "Messi, Messi". Pruna gave the bench a thumbs up, but coach Luis Enrique was not convinced.

Messi came back on and a minute later got the ball. He advanced a metre or so, gave a pass, and then stopped again. Gesturing for the bench to wait a bit, he tried to carry on but was soon sitting on the turf and the stadium went silent once more. He departed with eight minutes on the clock.

Barcelona won 2-1, with Luis Suarez getting both goals, but most people were more interested in what was happening at the Cruz Blau clinic, where Messi had been taken. Half an hour later, he emerged hobbling and climbed into a car. The statement was released quickly. Messi had suffered a tear in the medial ligament in his left knee and was expected to be out for six to eight weeks.

Messi will miss games against Bayer Leverkusen, Sevilla, Rayo Vallecano, BATE, Eibar, Getafe, BATE again, Villarreal and a Spanish Cup clash against opponents who are not yet known but will be from a lower division. He will also miss Argentina's games against Ecuador, Venezuela, Brazil and Colombia. The hope is for him to return in time for the *clasico* against Real Madrid, now confirmed for November 21.

The question is obvious, even if the flippant and fundamentally true answer might be "with Suarez and Neymar, of course": how do you replace someone irreplaceable? As *El Mundo Deportivo*'s cover put it: "Gulp!"

Sid Lowe

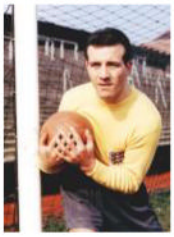
OBITUARIES

Dettmar CRAMER (1925-2015)
Coached a Bayern Munich side that included Franz Beckenbauer and Gerd Muller to European Cup success in 1975 and 1976, and was one of Helmut Schon's assistants during West Germany's run to the 1966 World Cup Final.

Charles GYAMFI (1929-2015)
The first African to play in Germany, joining Fortuna Dusseldorf in 1960, he captained Ghana and later went on to coach his national team, winning the African Nations Cup three times, in 1963, 1965 and 1982.

Pierre KALALA (1939-2015)
Arguably the best player to emerge from Zaire (now DR Congo), winning the African Nations Cup in 1968, and the African Champions Cup in 1967 and 1968 with TP Mazembe Englebert.

Ron SPRINGETT (1935-2015)
Goalkeeper who won 33 England caps and was a member of the 1966 World Cup-winning squad, having played every game four years earlier in Chile. An FA Cup finalist with Sheffield Wednesday in 1966, he returned to his first club, QPR, a year later in a swap deal for his brother and fellow keeper Peter.



World Cup winner ...Ron Springett

Ignacio ZOCO (1939-2015)
A left-half who played for Real Madrid between 1962 and 1974, winning seven league titles, two Spanish cups and the European Cup in 1966. While at Osasuna he became the first second-division player to appear for Spain, in a 2-1 win over Wales in Cardiff in 1961, and was later a European Championship winner in 1964.

Leader...Ignacio Zoco (left) against West Germany

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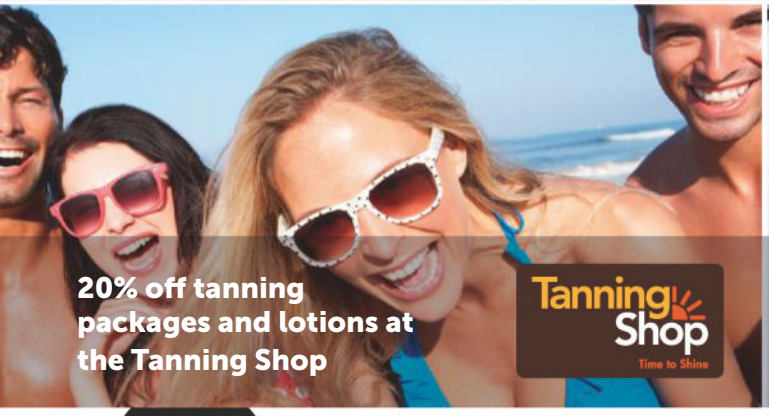

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Paul GARDNER

THE WORLDWIDE VIEW

Beware the analysts with designs on football's soul

Failure...John Terry misses his penalty for Chelsea in the 2008 Champions League Final shoot-out

I am not a great fan of academic intrusions into football as they rarely seem to add much insight into the game, usually telling us what we already knew, or don't need to know, with bewildering prolixity.

That intellectual tendency to liken football to chess irritates me from the start. It's absurd – so who better to debunk that notion than a reputable academic.

John Von Neumann, who is a mathematician and founder of the field of "Game Theory", explains: "Chess is not a game, it is a well-defined form of computation. You may not be able to work out the answer, but in theory there must be a solution, a right procedure for any position."

> Having a precise mathematical solution to every problem sounds like academic heaven. But it does not sound like football

Having a precise mathematical solution to every problem sounds like academic heaven. But it does not sound like football. With their arid, almost mechanical approach to the sport, the professors have a habit of intellectualising the life out of the game.

There are exceptions. Four years ago professor Ignacio Palacios-Huerta at the London School of Economics came up with a neat set of stats that showed your chances of winning a penalty shoot-out were significantly improved if you won the coin toss and chose to take the first kick. Teams going first had a 6 to 4 winning advantage over their opponents.

Palacios-Huerta offered a cure to this bias: use the sequence adopted in the tennis tie-break and change the couplings for the first 10 kicks from AB AB AB AB AB, to AB BA AB BA AB. This seems like a sensible suggestion – and as such it has, of course, been totally ignored by the rulemakers at IFAB, and the sport continues to decide games, including World Cup Finals, with a basically flawed system.

The idea of altering the sequence of kicks comes from a study of shoot-out statistics – the sort of thing that professors are good at. But this useful bit of academic research is of no use in the real game; it only applies in the synthetic, relatively static construct of the shoot-out. The helter-skelter movement of the 90-minute game rarely lends itself so clearly to statistical solutions. However, the boffins believe otherwise and will continue, no doubt, to favour us with the results of their research.

A recent study by Adam Greenberg of Nottingham University is a good example of telling us what we already know: that a team does better playing against a 10-man opponent than against their full team. But Greenberg has worked it out mathematically and he has the stats to prove there is an advantage. In the Premier League, he has calculated that home teams average 1.69 points in 11 v 11 games. But in 11 v 10 games that average goes up to 2.05 points.

That is quite a jump – and defining it so starkly should put a stop to all that moaning about it being difficult to play against 10 men. After all, if it's really that difficult, managers should consider starting the game with just 10 men on the pitch – which ought to make it more difficult for their 11-man opponents, no?

The limitations of stats are immediately exposed and I think the biggest problem of 11 v 10 games is they distort the sport, with the 10 men choosing to circle the wagons in defensive defiance. Which usually means a boring game and a sterile travesty of the sport. This is an aesthetic objection, of course, and no stats that I know of can measure aesthetic values.

Testing the validity of certain football cliches is Greenberg's aim and it's not a bad idea. Perhaps he'll now train his sights on verifying whether 2-0 really is the most dangerous scoreline in football, and whether teams are at their most vulnerable when they've just scored.

Greenberg, I suspect, will come up with statistics that will probably debunk – with mathematical certainty – those beliefs. Maybe that will be good for football, but maybe not. Being illogical may well be part of the sport's attraction. Likewise being perverse – the very perversity that will acknowledge the mathematical truth of Greenberg's stats, and then go on believing in the cliches anyway.

Evidently, the scientists – the professors, the computer techies, the performance analysts – would like to get a grip on football's soul. To turn this unruly, illogical, perverse but essentially human activity into an efficient smoothly operating science.

I trust they will not succeed. WS

"I'll always want things to go bad for Madrid. I wore a Buffon shirt during [last season's] Champions League semi-final and always want Madrid to lose. That's the way the Madrid-Barca rivalry is"

Barcelona's Gerard Pique feels no need to apologise for his dislike of Real Madrid

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

IN

EUROPE

Borussia Monchengladbach under-23s' coach **ANDRE SCHUBERT** took interim control of the first team following the resignation of Lucien Favre after they lost their first five Bundesliga games of the season (see page 77).

Serie A strugglers Carpi appointed former Watford manager **GIUSEPPE SANNINO** as a replacement for Fabrizio Castori, who left six games into the season without a win.

Former France midfielder **YOANN GOURCUFF**, who was without a club after leaving Lyon at the end of last season, joined Rennes on a one-year deal. The 29-year-old is not yet fit to play, however, due to a foot injury.

Waiting...Yoann Gourcuff is not yet ready to play

STEFAN STOICA was put in charge of Moldova's national team after they parted company with Alexandru Curteian.

Russian side Kuban Krasnodar replaced Dmitry Khokhlov with **SERGEI TASHUYEV.**

CONCACAF

RAMON MARADIAGA took charge of El Salvador's national side (see page 82).

Hot seat...Matias Almeyda has joined Guadalajara

Argentinian **MATIAS ALMEYDA** signed a two-year deal to coach Guadalajara after Mexico's most popular club dismissed Jose De la Torre. The 41-year-old Almeyda had previously coached River Plate and Banfield in his homeland.

AFRICA

RALPH JEAN-LOUIS was appointed coach of Seychelles' national team for a second time. During his last spell, he guided the Islanders to their finest hour, winning the Indian Ocean Games on home soil in 2011.

Progress...Yannick Ferrera is Standard's new boss

Standard appoint new coach

YANNICK FERRERA, who led Sint-Truiden to promotion last term and up to fifth place in this season's Belgian top flight, was appointed coach of Standard Liege, who sacked 62-year-old Serbian boss Slavoljub Muslin after a poor start to the campaign. Ferrera was replaced at Sint-Truiden by **CHRIS O'LOUGHLIN**, who appointed former South Africa striker **BENNI McCARTHY** as his assistant.

EUROPE

Ex-Chelsea and Tottenham Hotspur manager **ANDRE VILLAS-BOAS** has announced that he will will step down as boss of Zenit at the end of the Russian season. Struggling Anzhi parted company with **YURI SEMIN** after they won just one of their opening 10 league games.

Notice...Andre Villas-Boas says he'll quit Zenit

Tottenham Hotspur released striker **EMMANUEL ADEBAYOR** from his contract by mutual agreement. The Premier League side did not disclose details of a deal that saw the 31-year-old Togo international seeking a £5m pay-off. **FRANCO BALDINI** left his position as the club's technical director.

In Scotland, Motherwell parted company with **IAN BARACLOUGH** after a League Cup loss to second-tier side Morton, and **JACKIE McNAMARA** was relieved of his duties as manager of Dundee United after a poor start to the season.

Resigned...Tommy Breslin won two league titles

"If I was two-and-a-half metres tall and didn't know how to control a ball then I may have gone to England"

Sevilla's Ukrainian winger Yevhen Konoplyanka explains why he opted for La Liga this summer

Appointments, sackings and loans

OUT

Botosani sacked **LEONTIN GROZAVU** – meaning all six of the bottom sides in the Romanian top flight had changed coach after 10 games.

TOMMY BRESLIN, who won two Premiership titles as manager of Northern Irish side Cliftonville, resigned after a 6-1 defeat at Ballymena United.

EVA CARNEIRO, the club doctor who was criticised by Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho, has left the club.

SOUTH AMERICA

Bolivia captain **RONALD RALDES** and Venezuela midfielder **JUAN ARANGO** both announced their retirement from international football. Arango, who quit following a 1-1 draw with Panama, played more than 100 times for his country.

Short term...Daniel Amokachi lasted five weeks

CONCACAF

FRANK YALLOP was sacked by struggling MLS side Chicago Fire.

AFRICA

Former international captain **DANIEL AMOKACHI** quit as coach of big-spending Nigerian top-flight side Ifeanyi Ubah just five weeks after he was appointed.

ASIA

Malaysia coach **DOLLAH SALLEH** quit his post after a 10-0 loss to the United Arab Emirates – the heaviest defeat in the country's history.

Croatia fire Kovac, hire Cacic and controversial assistant Simunic

ANTE CACIC, coach of Zagreb club Lokomotiva, has signed a three-year deal to take charge of Croatia, replacing Niko Kovac, who was sacked after a 2-0 defeat by Norway left the country's hopes of qualifying automatically for Euro 2016 in the balance. He will be assisted by **JOSIP SIMUNIC**, the former international defender who was banned for 10 games and missed the 2014 World Cup for leading fans in a pro-Nazi chant after the World Cup qualifying play-off against Iceland in 2013.

Kovac came under fire from local media following a 0-0 draw in Azerbaijan and the loss to Norway a few days later. He also fell out with national captain Luka Modric, who was unhappy after being substituted against the Azeris and was also reported to have been upset at Kovac's claims that the players had not been fully committed against Norway.

The results left Croatia third in Euro 2016 qualifying group H with 15 points from eight matches, three adrift of the leaders Italy and one behind Norway. Croatia were deducted one point after a swastika was seen on the field before June's match against Italy.

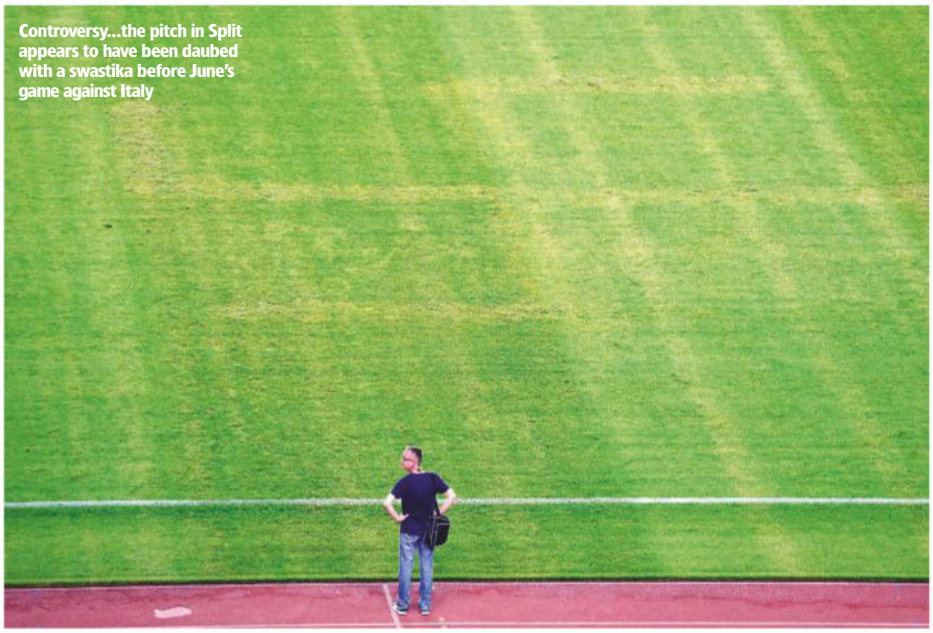
Cacic was appointed despite a modest record in domestic football and his only previous international experience being a spell as assistant coach of Libya. He won the domestic double with Dinamo Zagreb in 2012 but opinion polls did not back his appointment as national coach as he has a reputation for being the "house coach" of Zdravko Mamic, Dinamo's executive director and an influential figure in Croatian football.

In August, Mamic was arrested, along with his brother Zoran, Dinamo's sporting director, on charges of embezzlement, tax evasion and bribery.

Cacic will be assisted by Simunic, who failed to get his international ban overturned by the Committee of Arbitration for Sport and retired from playing in December 2014.

Simunic had been banned after leading celebrations following Croatia's qualification for the 2014 World Cup finals. He had taken a microphone and shouted to supporters: "For the homeland!" The fans responded: "Ready!" The chant was used by the Croatian pro-Nazi regime that ruled the state during the second world war.

John Holmesdale



Controversy...the pitch in Split appears to have been daubed with a swastika before June's game against Italy

Mamic's man... Croatia's Ante Cacic

Brian GLANVILLE

THE VOICE OF FOOTBALL

Filthy FIFA is rotten to the core

Don't say filth, say FIFA. More and more ugly vermin are crawling out from under stones almost every day. Scarcely has Jerome Valcke taken to his heels after being accused of making packets of money out of a ticket scam than Sepp Blatter is in the frame over a sweetheart deal with the ineffable Jack Warner.

The ultimate irony is that Warner promised to share any profits made but somehow forgot to do so, meaning FIFA is still owed the money on what was in any case a profoundly dubious deal.

And now Michel Platini is under the spotlight for receiving that hefty payment from FIFA for services rendered between 1998 and 2002. All £1.35million of it.

> "Platini's attempt to explain the hefty payment from FIFA for services rendered has been pitiful"

His attempt to explain it away has been pitiful, with a grovelling and evasive letter to all 54 members of the UEFA organisation, of which he is such an inadequate president, the dubious theme of which is "not me, Guv". The pathetic attempt to throw up a smokescreen utterly fails to explain why the allegedly due payment for "consultancy" was made fully nine years after it was agreed, or indeed the bizarre circumstances of the payment.

Great footballer though he was, Platini has been a wretched administrator, with what you might call the opposite of the Midas touch, in that almost everything he proposes and promulgates on examination turns to dross. Above all, or perhaps below all, is his support for Qatar as hosts of the 2022 World Cup, the dates for which have just been scandalously announced by FIFA.

We know Platini was under pressure from Nicolas Sarkozy, then president of France. We also now know of a meeting between them and a senior Qatar panjandrum. That Platini should betray his trust by agreeing to the staging of the tournament is bad enough, condemning as it initially would his European teams to play in the 50 degree centigrade heat. But then he compounded it by later agreeing to the finals being staged in the European winter – to the confusion and detriment of the clubs he is meant to represent and protect. Meanwhile, his son now enjoys a privileged post with a Qatari organisation.

It is the Swiss attorney general who has put the finger on Blatter for this oddly named "disloyal payment" to Platini. Just as the FBI brought the shocking charges against FIFA members accused of corrupt voting, so it is another body outside FIFA which has put Blatter in the dock and embarrassed Platini.

The implication is that for any kind of justice to be done, any kind of criminal investigation to be implemented, it has to be done outside FIFA itself. In a further element of farce, the FIFA executive committee has stonewalled so far a request from its ethics committee – don't please laugh, it does exist – over clarifying whom it is investigating. The committee wants the request to be reviewed by FIFA's legal committee, presided over by Spain's Angel Maria Villar – who has been under investigation himself by the ethics committee since last November!

In disgrace... Jerome Valcke

And what of our own ludicrous leaders? Greg Dyke, chairman of the FA, vice-chairman David Gill and chief executive Martin Glenn, the former driving force behind Walker's Crisps, have been happily endorsing Platini for FIFA president, despite his Qatari surrender, his absurd expansion of the European Championship finals, and his initiation of a bloated and distorted secondary European tournament. Now, of course, they have to backtrack.

In passing, let it be noted that FIFA's so-called ethics committee is seemingly now investigating the case of Valcke and his misdemeanours over those tickets.

Blatter will also be asked why he struck such a soft deal with Warner over these tickets and why pressure wasn't put on that miscreant when he hadn't even paid the share of his profits from the deal.

Valcke, having – with corrupt Chuck Blazer – disgraced himself in a New York court which called both of them liars over the Mastercard Visa affair, was in due course promoted to FIFA's top executive role without a peep from any federation. Now he has been run out of town on a rail.

Just as the old saying that war is too important to be left to generals, so football is too important to be left to the misguided world of football.

Red faced...English FA chairman Greg Dyke (left) has been forced to backtrack over his endorsement of Michel Platini

Wenger and Mourinho, partners in calamity

How are the mighty fallen. Arsene Wenger's Arsenal as good as out of the European Champions Cup, not as usual in the quarter-finals but at the preliminary group stage; Jose Mourinho's Chelsea largely outplayed at Porto, the club he so successfully and dramatically guided to victory in that same competition. Malicious though it may be, Mourinho perhaps has a point when he jeers that, of all managers, Wenger alone is in no danger of dismissal.

In fact, I thought that he was very lucky to survive a couple of seasons ago when shocking defeats by Chelsea, Manchester United and Liverpool would have cost the job of any manager in Italy's Serie A. But Wenger remained in the office he has occupied, largely with success, since his appointment in 1996. Yet in the match at the Emirates against unfancied Greek side Olympiakos, he was surely dicing with death by picking David Ospina, the Colombian, in goal while keeping the hugely experienced and commanding Petr Cech on the bench.

Ospina duly conceded a farcical goal, Olympiakos' second, fumbling the ball over his own line. Certainly he wasn't the only Arsenal player to incur blame for the inept defeat. The defence in which the giant Per Mertesacker came on only as a substitute, was wretchedly porous. The midfield malfunctioned. Wenger had announced breezily before the game that he had always promised Ospina a chance, not least in this tournament. Well, the birds came home abysmally to roost. It looked less like generosity on Wenger's part than casual self-indulgence.

And Mourinho? In Oporto, a visiting team which had been stuttering all season was lucky indeed to get away with a mere 2-1 defeat, giving it the possibility of group survival. Mourinho dropped the previously dynamic Eden Hazard from the starting line-up, but what good did that do? If any player surely should have been dropped, it was right-back Branislav Ivanovic, who has been sadly out of form and was almost predictably taken to the cleaners by an inspired Yacine Brahimi. How special, you might ask, is the Special One?

One's mind goes back to that dismal performance last season at Stamford Bridge against 10-man Paris Saint-Germain, who more than held out for 120 minutes, despite the controversial sending-off of their star striker, Zlatan Ibrahimovic.

Home and away... Arsenal goalkeeper George Swindin in action at the club's adopted war-time home of White Hart Lane

Arsenal owe it to Spurs to return the wartime favour

There is fresh talk of Tottenham Hotspur playing home fixtures in Milton Keynes while their White Hart Lane stadium is expanded. The hope of using Wembley seems to have been extinguished as Chelsea have beaten them to the punch. An obvious solution, to share the Olympic stadium, which they wanted to pull down and rebuild, is seen as a non-starter.

No chance at all, it seems, of sharing the Emirates with Arsenal, though it would arguably make good sense and could in historical terms surely be seen as a balanced reciprocation. In 1939, the Gunners were ejected from the Highbury home they had occupied since 1913 for it be taken over as a wartime headquarters.

So Arsenal moved their home games to White Hart Lane, where they continued to play until the start of the 1946-47 season, when at last they were able to return to Highbury, which had been bombed in the war, killing two RAF men manning a barrage balloon behind the Clock End goal.

No sentiment in football, I suppose, yet Spurs would surely have a moral case in wanting to share and share alike.

Farcical...Arsenal goalkeeper David Ospina drops the ball over his own line, allowing Olympiakos to go 2-1 ahead at the Emirates

Dr Eva deserved better

You wonder why Jose Mourinho incurred no penalty by the flaccid Football Association for his appalling behaviour over Chelsea's totally innocent Gibraltarian female doctor, Eva Carneiro. He was clearly heard via television using the shocking insult "daughter of a whore" in Portuguese. And this merely because she was doing her statutory duty in going on to the field to attend to Eden Hazard, at the request of the referee, which left her with no alternative but to comply.

The match against Swansea City, at that point, was almost over, with Chelsea already a man short. But rules are rules and there was no way the doctor could avoid her obligations.

Doing her duty...Eva Carneiro

Mourinho beyond doubt is an outstanding manager and coach. His manifold achievements speak for themselves. But Chelsea's recent misadventures inevitably lead to a certain general *schadenfreude,* as the Germans put it, meaning the derivation of satisfaction at others' misfortunes.

As for the hapless and wholly justified Carneiro, it must be said that the writing was on the wall when she went public to thank those people who sympathised with her over the way she had been abused and treated.

A monumental egotist such as Jose Mourinho was never going to let her get away with that.

● Read Brian Glanville's exclusive online column at worldsoccer.com

eyewitness

James Montague reports from Hamburg

GERMANY

Refugees welcome

St Pauli lead football's response to humanitarian crisis

The players were led out hand in hand by the children of refugees as the crowd in all four stands stood to applaud. When the teams from Borussia Dortmund and St Pauli reached the middle of the pitch, the messages were raised too.

Homemade signs, some made out of ripped up cardboard boxes, next to flags and more professionally-made posters. Some were in English, some in German and a few in Arabic. Next to them, larger banners were unfurled that sent a message not just to fellow fans, the players and the clubs, but to the outside world.

"No Border, No Nation," read one. "Say It Loud, Say It Clear, Refugees Are Welcome Here!" read the biggest.

At present, Europe has been gripped by the worst refugee crisis since the end of the Second World War. Tens of thousands have arrived in Europe on a daily basis, the vast majority of which are fleeing the civil war in Syria, where over half the country has now been displaced.

As their numbers have grown, so has the political opposition and mistreatment at the hands of the authorities, especially in Hungary. But two moments have shifted the mood. The first was the discovery, in August, of a refrigerated truck, abandoned on a highway in Austria, crammed with the bodies of 71 refugees who had suffocated. The second was a picture of Aylan Kurdi, a three-year-old Syrian Kurd found dead, face down on a beach in Turkey.

St Pauli's Millerntor-Stadion in Hamburg has long been used to political banners and campaigns organised by the fans. The team comes from the working-class St Pauli district famous for its activism, socialism and, along the backstreets of the Reeperbahn, its hedonism too. They have built a reputation not just as a cult football club, but perhaps the most moral side in world sport, having campaigned from the terraces upwards on everything from gay rights to racism to mental health. And this match, a friendly against Dortmund during international week, was to be no different.

It was decided that the match would be dedicated to refugees. One thousand tickets would be given free to recently arrived refugees. But for once, St Pauli weren't the black sheep of the party. The mood had changed in German football. The now ubiquitous "Refugees Welcome" banners had already started appearing at almost every Bundesliga match, as supporters attempted to inject some humanity and realism into the mass exodus.

Across the game, clubs lined up to help. Bayern Munich offered 1m euro (£735,000) and the setting-up of a football camp for refugees. Real Madrid and Paris Saint-Germain matched that, while Roma announced they would donate just under £500,000. The German football federation, the DFB, launched the "1-0 for a Welcome" project, with the aim of offering 500 euro (£370) payments to clubs who assist refugees and migrants.

"We want to assist amateur teams to help refugees play football quickly and without complications," said DFB president Wolfgang Niersbach. Referring to the photo of Kurdi, Roma's American owner Jim Pallotta said: "The final straw was

Getting the message...St Pauli players with Syrian refugee children at the Millerntor, while (left) refugees at Mainz after being invited by the club to watch a Bundesliga match

Photo: Offside/Witters

seeing the pictures of refugees and the three-year-old dead on the beach. If that can't affect you then nothing will."

A few hours before kick-off in Hamburg, Christian Pruss was nervously smoking a cigarette inside an empty Millerntor as his phone rang constantly. "We have to react due to the circumstances in the whole of Europe and especially Germany in the last few weeks," said Pruss, who had been put in charge of the club's response to the refugee crisis.

Like everyone who works at St Pauli, he was in regulation black T-shirt and jeans. Around the pitch staff busied themselves getting the stadium ready. Outside stood vans packed with bottled water, ready to be handed out to the 1,000 refugees who would be arriving, many to the camp that had just been opened a few hundred metres from the stadium. As well as donating the 1,000 tickets – "a chance to meet the neighbours" joked Pruss – the club raised €45,000 (£33,200) in donations. In 24 hours they had also made enough to help fund a search-and-rescue boat in the Mediterranean. When asked whether St Pauli's famous skull-and-crossbones flag would be flying over the vessel, Pruss laughed. "No, I am not sure that would send the right message," he said. "Always the club is without money, we are famous for it. But we have credibility."

The club has become famous more for its actions off the pitch than on it. Last season they narrowly avoided relegation to the third division, but they now have a new owner who vows that football comes first. For now, that can take a back seat. "We think we can provide more than just football," said Pruss. "Not just about 90 minutes. We have a responsibility for the people around the club."

No one takes that more seriously than the fans. Since 2004, the St Pauli ultras group has been visiting camps around Hamburg, bringing clothes, food and lawyers to help the refugees with their complex asylum applications. "It is a kind of radical way to support a football club. We are not just supporting the club but politically too," said Lucas, one of the youngest members of the group.

For Lucas, the club's social conscience has always come first. "It's why I love this club," he said. "But German society is divided in to two parts. One supports the refugee struggle and wants to help. The other thinks: 'We don't need them, it's too much, go back home'. I can't imagine how these people think."

One refugee the ultras met during their outreach work was so taken aback that he ended up joining the group. Nine months ago, after an aborted attempt to reach western Europe through Moscow, shortly after being drafted into the Syrian army, 23-year-old Megd Abo Amsha left his home in Damascus, crossed the mountains into Turkey and paid people smugglers £4,000 to chart the perilous Mediterranean. From Sicily he criss-crossed Europe by train until he arrived in a refugee camp in Hamburg. There he met the St Pauli ultras who took him to a league match.

"The amount of beer consumption here is quite different, I can tell you that!" he said when recalling his first visit to the club. "I was really scared. I didn't know who the people were or what St Pauli was. I had no idea where these guys were taking me but when I got here I found a really positive atmosphere. It felt like family".

Amsha kept returning to the Millerntor, helping other refugees by translating from Arabic into his newly learned German. "Most of the Syrian people don't believe in those who say they are helping any more," he said of the distrust many Syrians felt after being exploited on the roads and seas to Europe. "You don't see people helping people for nothing. It is a matter of rebuilding some trust, rebuilding humanity."

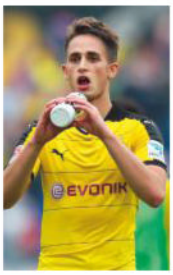
> "We think we can provide more than just football. Not just about 90 minutes. We have a responsibility for the people around the club"
>
> **St Pauli's Christian Pruss**

However, not everyone shares the sentiments of the St Pauli ultras. Football clubs rarely come together with such unanimity, so when the European Club Association – a group that represents the interests of Europe's biggest clubs and is chaired by Bayern Munich's Karl-Heinz Rummenigge – announced that one euro would be donated from every ticket sold for each team's first home match in the Champions League, not everyone agreed it was a reasonable, compassionate sentiment. The decision was met in some place with different kinds of banners: "Refugees NOT Welcome".

In eastern Europe especially – where opposition to accepting refugees is highest – several teams were dismayed money from ticket sales was going to refugee charities. Lech Poznan ultras boycotted their opening home Europa League match against Belenenses in protest. Instead, they hung a banner that said "Stop Islamisation" outside the entrance. According to *The Guardian,* a banner at a previous match read: "This is obvious and simple for us, we do not want refugees in Poland".

In the Czech Republic, Sparta Prague fans threatened to boycott their home game against APOEL in October if the donations were made. "Refugees Not Welcome" banners appeared at Lyon and also at Maccabi Tel Aviv's match with Hapoel Kiryat Shmona. Yet their hated left-wing city rivals Hapoel Tel Aviv displayed a banner that read: "Who isn't a migrant here?" referencing the fact that most Israeli families had fled persecution in either Europe or the Middle East.

Cracks were also appearing in those looking to help refugees. When *Bild,* a right-wing German tabloid, teamed up with the DFB to compel teams to wear pro-refugee messages, many clubs – including St Pauli – refused, believing that the newspaper had fed anti-refugee



Empathy...Adnan Januzaj's Kosovan family fled to Belgium to escape the war in Yugoslavia

Bearing gifts... German Football Federation president Wolfgang Niersbach (left) presents signed footballs at a refugee camp near Frankfurt

Too late...Hertha Berlin fans dismiss Bild's U-turn on its perceived anti-refugee stance as a marketing ploy

feeling in the past and this "about-turn" was purely to boost sales.

Instead of "Refugees Welcome" banners, several reading "#BILD notwelcome" could be seen.

Back at the Millerntor, the stadium was filling up. Outsider the Gegengerade east stand, Ibrahim Ismail was standing with his five Syrian and Iraqi friends, holding their own hand-made banners. "They say 'Thank You Hamburg', 'Thank You St Pauli', and "Many Thanks Germany," said Ismail, pointing to the scraps of cardboard, signed in black marker pen and written in German and Arabic. He and his friends decided to make them after hearing they would be given a free ticket for the game.

"We feel there are still some people who love other people, that there is a humanitarian feeling between peoples," said Ismail, who arrived from Raqqa – the Islamic State's unofficial capital in northern Syria – two months ago. He, like hundreds of others at the game, had been placed in refugee camps around the port city.

"We feel like we are not alone during this difficult time," added Ismail as a huge white "Refugees Welcome" banner was unfolded high up on the stand behind him.

The Millerntor was almost full with a crowd of over 25,000 by the time the teams and refugee children appeared. Among the Dortmund team were players with their own recent history of exile: Neven Subotic, a Bosnian Serb whose family fled the city of Banja Luka for Germany during the Yugoslav War, and Adnan Januzaj, whose Kosovan family fled to Belgium from the same conflict.

Happy ending... St Pauli and Borussia Dortmund players pay their own tribute to the refugees

Dortmund won 2-1 and after the final whistle the players from both teams walked to the four sides of the pitch: the St Pauli team holding one banner that said "Refugees", the Dortmund players holding one that said "Welcome".

Later that evening, outside a bar underneath the Gegengerade stand playing punk rock at earsplitting volume, the refugees walked back home to their respective camps. "Too bad we didn't win," said Amsha before leaving early. He had a German exam in the morning and hopes one day to finish the studies cut short by being called up to the army.

"We can help build a society here, this is the only one that gave us a chance to be part of it." he said.

"Just give us a chance." WS

Sid Lowe reports from Vigo

SPAIN

Celta down Barca in style

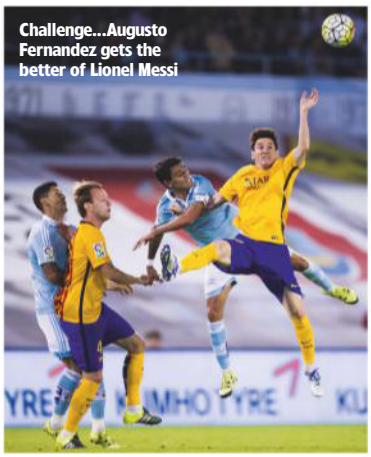
The reigning Spanish and European champions no match for Eduardo Berizzo's exciting side

Rarely in La Liga does the attention fall on a team other than Spain's big two, but when Barcelona lost in the league for the first time in eight months this September, their opponents were thoroughly deserving of their moment in the spotlight.

Celta Vigo had been in superb form this season – and indeed for much of last term – before the arrival of Barca in Galicia, having torn into Sevilla at the Sanchez Pizjuan the week previously. But it was the 4-1 victory at Balaidos against the reigning European champions that made everyone sit up and take note.

Victory was achieved with goals from Nolito, Iago Aspas (two) and John Guidetti, but even if the scoreline had been different – both sides had 17 shots on target and the visitors did miss a handful of clear-cut chances – the sensation would have remained. That is because this was not just about the result, this was about a performance that showcased all of the things that make Celta one of the most enjoyable teams to watch in Spain.

As Javier Mascherano put it after the game, the worrying thing for him and his team-mates was not just that Barcelona had been beaten, but that the defeat was deserved. "We felt outplayed, beaten," admitted the Argentinian defender. "This was about our opponents' huge virtues; they played perfectly."



Challenge...Augusto Fernandez gets the better of Lionel Messi

Double...two-goal hero Iago Aspas

Before the game, Barca boss Luis Enrique – who had been Celta's coach until May 2014 – said that if his side were not ready, their hosts would fly right past them at "200 kilometres an hour". He had added "they'll steamroller us" – and he was right.

According to goalscorer Nolito, Celta "enjoy playing like this", although Barcelona enjoyed it rather less. Every time one of Enrique's players looked up, there was a Celta player running towards them; every time they paused, there was a Celta player running away from them. One newspaper likened Barca to a deer frozen in the headlights of an oncoming truck.

Unused to being pressured so high and so relentlessly, Barcelona couldn't deal with it. Many teams in the past have tried to deny Barca the chance to play the final pass, but Celta sought to deny them the first pass, the one that gets everything going, and set the game up as a series of one-on-one battles all over the pitch.

Barcelona were torn to bits, yet there was admiration too. "The only thing I can do is congratulate them," admitted Enrique. "They played very well, generating lots of one-on-ones, which they won almost everywhere. If you have to lose, let it be like this: on a watered pitch, the grass cut short, no tricks, no traps, [just] a team that has one of the most attractive footballing ideals in the league."

In charge...coach Eduardo Berizzo

Start...Nolito (out of picture) scores the opener

As one newspaper headline put it, "Celta were Barcelona" and Luis Enrique had played his part in this. There is continuity in their project, led by the club's president Carlos Mourino. However, Enrique's successor, Eduardo "Tata" Berizzo, has made his mark, too. He explained that the victory over Barcelona had gone "exactly as we had hoped it would".

It is the way Berizzo hopes most games will be, and it was recognisably Celta's way, his way. As a young central defender, he was tough and aggressive. "When you remember Berizzo the player, you immediately reach for your ankles," Jose Miguelez wrote. Above all, Berizzo was

serious, committed – and fascinated by the man he played for. In his own words: "I am soaked in Bielsa-ism."

Berizzo first met Marcelo Bielsa when he was 13 and joined the youth system at Newell's Old Boys. He made his first-team debut in 1990 and was at the heart of the side that won two consecutive league titles, before following his mentor to Mexico. Their paths later split and Berizzo's career took him to Celta, where he played between 2001 and 2005, but they came together again when Bielsa made him his assistant with the Chilean national team.

> "We felt outplayed, beaten...they played perfectly"
>
> **Javier Mascherano after Barcelona's 4-1 defeat by Celta Vigo**

Shadow...Pablo Hernandez tracks Javier Mascherano

"I loved learning daily; we were constantly innovating," says Berizzo, who then went it alone and won the Chilean league with O'Higgins – the first time they had taken the title in 58 years. Celta were his next stop and the lessons he had learned were never forgotten. The shared footballing identity was clear: the high intensity, the coordination, the pressure, applied high and aggressively, everyone chasing down an opponent, the sheer relentlessness.

"He was a kind of guide, someone who educated me in how to coach," adds Berizzo. "I have the same tactical ideas as Marcelo but above all his ethical behaviour, his way of approaching his profession as a coach."

When asked about his philosophy, Berizzo once explained: "I like to have control of the game. I like my team to be the protagonist." Against Barcelona, virtually no one is ever the protagonist, but Celta Vigo were – and, emerging from the game joint-top of the table, they surely will be again. They will not back down and they will continue to go for their opponents.

And according to Enrique: "Celta have the potential to be one of the chosen teams in this league." WS

Phil Gordan reports from Scotland

SCOTLAND

Aberdeen dream of return to glory days

Derek McInnes' Dons have shaken up Scottish top flight

There are two stars on the Aberdeen crest, signifying the two European trophies they won in 1983. Yet it is the absence of European football this season that could be the most crucial factor in their bid to return to the summit of Scottish football.

For almost three decades, every Aberdeen manager has been weighed down by the past and the legacy left by Alex Ferguson. But not Derek McInnes. His side now have the north-east coastal city dreaming of a first league title in 30 years.

Ferguson won three league titles (1980, 1984 and 1985) for the Dons, as well as a European Cup-winners Cup triumph over Real Madrid and the European Super Cup win against Hamburg in 1983, plus four Scottish Cups, before Manchester United lured him away in 1986.

McInnes, though, conjured up the best start in the club's 112-year history by winning all eight opening Scottish Premiership games, eclipsing Ferguson's five in 1984-85. Aberdeen's 10 men hit back to beat Celtic 2-1 in front of a sell-out Pittodrie Stadium in September, and even though their perfect record fell in a 2-1 defeat at Inverness Caledonian Thistle, they went into October four points clear of the defending champions.

The fact that Celtic also slipped up with a draw at home to Hearts on the same day fed Aberdeen's belief that they can actually win the title. McInnes will certainly be helped in that task with Celtic's Europa League commitments, as difficult games against Ajax, Fenerbahce and Molde will drain Ronny Deila's squad.

McInnes hoped to be on the same stage, but his side lost 3-2 to big-spending Kairat Almaty in the third qualifying round, a year after Real Sociedad had ruined similar hopes of progress.

However, his side will profit from being able to rest while Celtic face the perennial continent-wide problem of balancing European and domestic schedules.

Like Ferguson, McInnes is a former Rangers player who has won over a local public which has a deep antipathy for that particular Glasgow club. The 44-year-old's shrewd recruitment policy since taking charge in 2013 has not only made the best use of a modest budget, but echoes the Ferguson epoch.

> "Derek sets high standards and won't let anyone drop below them"
>
> **Neale Cooper, a former team-mate of Aberdeen boss Derek McInnes**

The similarity with "Fergie" is obvious to the players from those glory days. Neale Cooper was part of the side which beat Real Madrid and saw McInnes use the same methods in the wake of that defeat at Inverness.

"Derek didn't hold back but it doesn't do any harm to give your players a bit of a kick up the backside sometimes," says Cooper. "They have been highly praised in the press and by the manager – rightly so.

"Derek had a pop in public but it was something Sir Alex used to good effect at Pittodrie. Fergie would even have a go after we had won games. He famously slaughtered us after winning the Scottish Cup, four days after beating Real, but it definitely kept us on our toes.

"You'd read the stuff in the paper and think, 'that's harsh', but you'd be out to make amends. Derek has a bit of that in him, there are shades of Fergie. Like him, Derek sets high standards and won't let anyone drop below them."

Aberdeen's ascent is not luck. McInnes won the Scottish League Cup in his first season and beat Celtic twice. Last season, Aberdeen matched Celtic in all results against the other sides but crucially lost all four matches to the Glasgow club.

McInnes' good organisation has made

Making his mark... Derek McInnes

Winners...Billy Stark (left) and Alex Ferguson after a Scottish Cup Final victory over Hearts in 1986

Strong...Adam Rooney eludes a challenge from Celtic's Scott Brown (left) in Aberdeen's 2-1 league win at Pittodrie

Aberdeen hard to beat, but he also has a good eye for talent. Northern Ireland winger Niall McGinn has shone at Pittodrie in a way he didn't at Celtic and he has formed a superb partnership with Adam Rooney who netted 28 goals last season. The signing of free agent left-back Graeme Shinnie from Inverness last summer was the best bit of business in Scottish football.

Those initial eight wins prompted Deila to say he did not care because over the course of the season Celtic would come out on top and win a fifth successive title. McInnes' response was simple. "Any manager in our league would be confident of winning five in a row given the level of finances Celtic have," he said. "The rest of us are working on budgets of between £1-£2million and they're working with around £20m. I've no problems with that. Every manager has to concentrate on their own team and we're no different."

Euro crown...the Cup-winners Cup triumph over Real Madrid in 1983

Perhaps the best-placed person to weigh up the duel between Aberdeen and Celtic is the only man to win league titles with both. Billy Stark was part of the last Aberdeen side to win in 1984-85, and also won with Celtic in 1987-88.

"It's still early, but Aberdeen have proved they're serious contenders," says Stark. "You need to remember that when Graeme Souness took over Rangers in 1986, it was the catalyst for spending money when it came to Scottish football.

"Rangers spent fortunes then Celtic eventually started spending, too. A few months after Souness arrived, Fergie left Aberdeen for Manchester United.

"Aberdeen couldn't match the investment of the Glasgow clubs and still can't. So, given that gap in resources, if Derek can guide Aberdeen to the title it will be a phenomenal achievement – equal to anything Fergie did." WS

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WORDS: JOHN CHAPMAN & NICK BIDWELL

Manchester City's record signing is a fiercely determined character who is not afraid to take bold decisions

Kevin De Bruyne is no ordinary footballer. Manchester City's record signing, who joined from Wolfsburg in August in a mouth-watering £55million deal, has a fascinating history.

De Bruyne is Flemish but his family's roots are diverse. His mother, Anne Callant, was mainly educated in England and De Bruyne has described her as having an English mentality. His maternal grandfather worked in the oil business and the family lived in Africa, where his mother was born, before moving to London. One of his uncles still lives there, not far from Stamford Bridge, while another uncle and aunt live in Paris, after being educated in various Lycees Francais.

His mother now lives in Flanders, the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium, so when the family gets together, De Bruyne could be using any of the four languages – Dutch, French, English and German – he speaks fluently. That linguistic ability means he's comfortable wherever he finds himself – which is a useful strength given that he's played for five clubs in three countries in the past four years.

Long before he reached the dizzy heights of the Premier League, De Bruyne was known for being fiercely determined, prone to speaking his mind and making his own decisions. Nothing has changed.

Making tough choices started early for De Bruyne. At the age of eight, while playing for his local side, Drongen, he decided to join Gent as he liked their training pitches. His father, Herwig, learnt of this when Drongen's coaches asked him if he agreed with young Kevin.

De Bruyne has admitted that he can be too frank and that sometimes he needs to hold his emotions back. That's especially true when he feels he's been wronged. This can end happily though. He once warmed up badly before a junior game at Gent and was benched. Furious, he later got on the pitch – and to make a point

Timeline

MAY 9, 2009 – Makes his first-team debut for Genk, in a 3-0 defeat at Charleroi.

MAY 23, 2009 – Is an unused sub as Genk beat Mechelen 2-0 to win the Belgian Cup Final in Brussels.

FEB 7, 2010 – Scores his first goal for Genk, in a 1-0 win against Standard Liege.

AUG 11, 2010 – Makes his international debut for Belgium, in a 1-0 friendly defeat by Finland in Turku.

MAY 17, 2011 – A 1-1 home draw with closest rivals Standard Liege secures the Belgian league title for Genk.

scored all his side's six goals. After six years at Gent and a disagreement with the coaches, De Bruyne joined Genk despite interest from Anderlecht and Club Brugge. According to his mother, after the family had visited the club's facilities, he got into the car and announced "that's where I'm going to play".

Having been brought up in the Gent suburbs, the move to Genk – 150 kilometres from the family home – was a big challenge for a 14-year-old. He was first placed in digs with older boys, some from disturbed backgrounds. His parents weren't happy with the situation and wanted him to return home. But De Bruyne was not one to give up and fortunately he was able to move to a more settled environment.

Genk's academy director at the time, Roland Breugelmans, said that it wasn't apparent that De Bruyne would make it, as others, such as Steven Defour, were even more determined, while youngsters such as Thibaut Courtois were obviously set for the top. He did have his moments, though. As a 17-year-old, playing for Genk under-21s against Zulte Waregem, De Bruyne replaced Jelle Vossen at half-time and scored five goals in a 10-0 victory. After that it was not going to be long before he made his first-team debut.

That came in 2009 and in the following season he became a regular starter. While still a junior member of the squad, he famously told Israel international Elyaniv Barda to bring in the cones after one session as he thought he had not been pulling his weight.

When Franky Vercauteren arrived as coach, De Bruyne's career blossomed. At the time, Genk's midfield was being successfully policed by David Hubert and Daniel Tozer, meaning De Bruyne had to be satisfied with a place on the wing. That season again showed De Bruyne's strength of character as he was out of action for some weeks with a bout of glandular fever and at the same time, his maternal grandmother – to whom he was extremely close – died in her London home.

When he got back in the side, De Bruyne was instrumental in the league going to Genk in one of the closest title races for many years – with the championship only being settled on the final day. In that season, from the left wing, De Bruyne scored four goals with 16 assists. Vercauteren became a big fan and later stated that he thought De Bruyne could function as a "6, 7, 8, 10 or 11".

Talking tactics...with coach Mario Been in his final year at Genk

De Bruyne – along with Courtois – was now in the shop window. As he's a genuine two-footed player, with pace, strength and a good football brain, it was no surprise when Chelsea came calling. He signed for them in January 2012, only to be immediately loaned back to Genk.

De Bruyne's boss in his final season was Dutch coach Mario Been. Before a match with Club Brugge, Been reportedly said that he expected more from De Bruyne than he did from the other players; his response was a hat-trick and two assists in a 5-4 win that led to Club Brugge coach Adrie Koster being sacked the following day.

De Bruyne's form that season was not consistent, though that was hardly surprising given the constant talk of a move to England. Earlier, the somewhat prescient Been had warned De Bruyne about a move to a big club at a young age, reasoning that some players did that only to end up rotting on the bench.

De Bruyne arrived at Chelsea in the summer of 2012 to find much had changed. Andre Villas-Boas, Chelsea's manager when the transfer had been agreed with Genk, had been fired. They had won the Champions League in Munich under interim boss Roberto Di Matteo, who limped on until the autumn, to be replaced by the unpopular – with fans – choice of Rafa Benitez.

De Bruyne joined Chelsea's pre-season tour of the USA, but faced with competition from fellow new signings Eden Hazard, Oscar and Marko Marin, he opted for a season-long loan at Werder Bremen.

The move to the Bundesliga would ultimately prove successful. Although he complained to the Belgian media he was unhappy in Bremen, describing the club as "lacking warmth", the season ended with Borussia Dortmund and Bayer Leverkusen reportedly interested in signing him.

Then he took a phone call from Jose Mourinho, who said he was wanted back at Stamford Bridge.

Mourinho, beginning his second spell at Chelsea, started De Bruyne in the opening Premier League game of the season for Chelsea, a 2-0 home win over Hull City. But he quickly lost his first-team place and subsequently made only sporadic appearances as Mourinho decided that he did not fit with his tactical gameplan.

"I didn't get any explanation [for being

> "I only talked with him twice. That was before the game against Basle"
>
> **De Bruyne on his relationship with Jose Mourinho**

Main man... De Bruyne proved Genk's academy director wrong

Scores his first hat-trick for Genk, in a 5-4 win against Club Brugge.	Signs for Premier League club Chelsea on transfer deadline day but is loaned back to Genk for the rest of the season.	Scores his first goal back on loan at the club from Chelsea, as Genk win 2-1 at Mons.	After playing just a few games on tour for Chelsea, he is loaned to Werder Bremen for the season.	Scores his first goal for Bremen, in a 3-2 defeat to Hanover.	Scores his first goal for Belgium with a 68th-minute strike in a 3-0 World Cup qualifying win over Serbia in Belgrade.
OCT 29, 2011	JAN 31, 2012	FEB 18, 2012	AUG 2, 2012	SEP 15, 2012	OCT 12, 2012

dropped]," De Bruyne said. "I only talked with Mourinho twice. That was before the game against Basle. He said I was doing better, in his opinion, and that I would get my chance.

"I think that was maybe November. And then one week before January, that's the day I said I wanted to go because even if I was training better, I was not getting any minutes. So for me, it was better to go."

De Bruyne was sold in January 2014 to Wolfsburg for £15m, a fee that allowed Chelsea to turn a profit, subsidising the £21m re-purchase of Nemanja Matic from Benfica.

"I don't regret it," he said of his time at Chelsea. "I just needed to go so that things could be better for me personally. Selling was probably better than loaning because if you go on loan you just return to the same situation."

Mourinho, not surprisingly, saw things differently. "I wanted to keep him and he told me it was not in his personality to be competing for a position in the team," said the Portuguese. "He needed a team where he knows he can play every game. He needs to know that he is important.

"He did not want a team where he thinks: 'Am I playing or not?' He needs that trust, he needs that quality. He needs that security. So I was not happy when he left. He didn't tell me he couldn't handle the pressure. He told me he didn't like it and that he wanted to play every weekend.

"I told him, 'This is Chelsea, you are very young, you have Eden Hazard, Juan Mata, Willian, Andre Schurrle...I cannot promise you that.'

"He told me he was not happy. He was not training very well, I was asking for more and he was saying, 'I can't give you more. This is just my way.' So yes, I accept if this is his mentality and it's his choice to go, it is better for Chelsea to make a good deal."

De Bruyne was also desperate for first-team action ahead of the World Cup in Brazil after Belgium's promising side had qualified for the first time since 2002. Hein Vanhaezebrouck, coach of Belgian champions Gent, has compared De Bruyne to Johan Cruyff. "His play, vision, goals – all remind me of Cruyff." The Dutch maestro was dominant in the Holland team and – regarding De Bruyne – there is an ongoing debate about how much influence he should have in the Belgium side.

Georges Leekens gave De Bruyne his international debut in 2010 but his career really got going two years later when Marc Wilmots threw him into a tough World Cup qualifier in Belgrade. De Bruyne was exceptional. Playing on the right wing, he was the dominant player on the pitch – scoring and making a goal for ex-Genk club mate Christian Benteke.

Throughout the remainder of the qualifiers, De Bruyne was outstanding and was arguably the main reason Belgium reached Brazil, being involved in 44 per cent of the team's goals and finishing as their leading goalscorer.

In his 30-odd games for Belgium, De Bruyne's time has been roughly spilt between the right flank and central midfield. Wilmots certainly has a number of alternatives in the centre – Axel Witsel, Radja Nainggolan and Steven Defour to name but three. However, another reason De Bruyne has not been played in his favoured central role is down to the presence of Eden Hazard.

The Chelsea man's international performances have frequently been criticised by the Belgian media and matters came to a head in March when Belgium played Wales. De Bruyne started in the number 10 role with Hazard on the left. Hazard looked up for the game and frequently moved into the centre to take on more responsibility.

The result was chaos – and a 0-0 draw. In De Bruyne's words: "Eden was often coming into the centre, which limited my space. Wilmots said I had to stay in the centre but I spontaneously moved to the flanks to find more room."

Since then, Wilmots has decided that he would place De Bruyne on the right with Hazard on the left. That leaves more room for strength and

Reward...a kiss from his mum after a World Cup group win over Russia in Brazil

Sidelined...on the Chelsea bench with Samuel Eto'o at Stoke City

Red Devils...celebrating a goal with Eden Hazard

Makes his first-team debut for Chelsea, on the opening day of the Premier league season in a 2-0 win against Hull City.

AUG 18, 2013

Plays his last game for Chelsea, in a 2-1 extra-time defeat away to Sunderland in the League Cup quarter-finals.

DEC 17, 2013

After another intermittent spell at Chelsea, he signs for Wolfsburg.

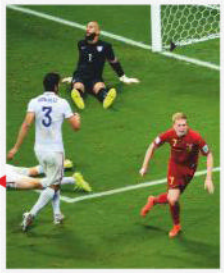
JAN 18, 2014

Scores his first goal in Wolfsburg colours as they win 3-1 away to Hamburg in the Bundesliga.

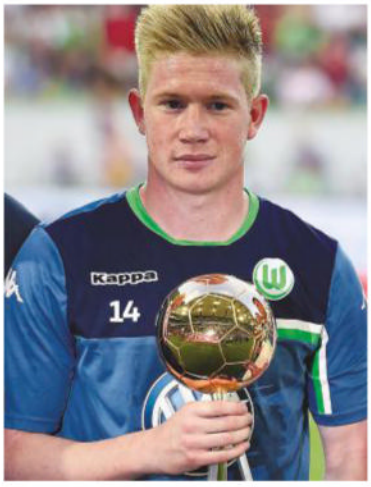
APR 19, 2014

Scores in extra-time as Belgium beat USA 2-1 in the round of 16 at the World Cup in Brazil.

JUL 1, 2014



Marked man...scythed down by Borussia Monchengladbach's Roel Brouwers while playing for Wolfsburg



Award...named the Bundesliga Player of the Year

power in midfield, with both Nainggolan and Marouane Fellaini starting in recent games, but it does leave a genuine lack of creativity in a key area of the pitch.

It's acknowledged that De Bruyne has the ability to cross the ball accurately with either foot but it was at Wolfsburg, in a central role, that the Belgian made his name and his reputation.

De Bruyne's breakout success last season – the 10 goals and 21 assists in the Bundesliga and a German league Player of the Year award – essentially was brought about by a positional switch. After spending his first half-season in a variety of midfield slots – wide right, wide left and through the middle – Wolfsburg coach Dieter Hecking made the decision last autumn to definitively put him at the very heart of the team's attacking operation, lining him up in the "hole" but also giving him the freedom to roam and follow his instincts.

Speedy, dynamic, two-footed, packing a powerful shot from distance and excellent on the counter, De Bruyne took to the role like a duck to water and clearly came to relish his status as his side's leading game-changer.

"Kevin is a player who looks for room," explained Hecking. "He uses the entire width of the pitch. He's very hard to pick up. While I've seen him perform very well for Belgium on the wing, he wants to play centrally and I agree that it's his optimum position."

> "I've see Kevin perform very well on the wing but he wants to play centrally and I agree that it's his optimum position"
>
> Wolfsburg coach Dieter Hecking

To all intents and purposes three players in one – modern-day number 10, freewheeling front man and busy winger – De Bruyne's chameleon-like ability offered Hecking a rainbow of options and this flexibility was what made Wolfsburg so dangerous last term.

During his 18 months at the VW club, he undoubtedly matured as a footballer. A little too individualistic in his early days with Genk and obsessed with the killer through ball, he learnt at Wolfsburg to keep it simple, putting efficiency and teamwork before the glory.

In the fast-paced and generally open Bundesliga, he had the perfect stage for his skill-set, plenty of open spaces to drive into and lots of runners to play in.

For De Bruyne, Wolfsburg was the right move at the right time. At Chelsea and on loan at Werder Bremen, he had felt unappreciated and unwelcome, but in the Autostadt he would feel much more at home, with club chief executive, Klaus Allofs invariably showering him with praise and coach Hecking an obvious fan.

"I tend to play him week in and week out," said Hecking last year. "He'd be angry if I didn't." While Mourinho gave him the cold shoulder at Stamford Bridge, Wolfsburg embraced him and that made all the difference.

De Bruyne's determination to better himself was in evidence again this summer, when Manchester City, in need of more midfield guile, came calling.

It remains to be seen whether De Bruyne can live up to his pricetag at the Etihad Stadium following his £55m transfer. The competition for a midfield attacking berth – with David Silva, Raheem Sterling, Samir Nasri and Jesus Navas all in the mix too – will be fierce.

But the lessons of his career so far are that Kevin De Bruyne will not take rejection lightly. WS

Delight...celebrating his goal against USA in the World Cup round of 16 in Brazil

Scores the second goal as Wolfsburg beat Borussia Dortmund 3-1 in the German Cup Final.

MAY 30, 2015

Returns to the Premier League and joins Manchester City for £55million.

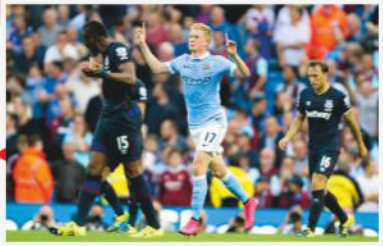
MAY 30, 2015

Makes his Manchester City debut, replacing Sergio Aguero in the first half of their 1-0 win against Crystal Palace.

AUG 30, 2015

Scores his first goal for City, grabbing a consolation as they lose 2-1 at home to West Ham United.

SEP 12, 2015



SEP 19, 2015

Kevin De Bruyne

the numbers game

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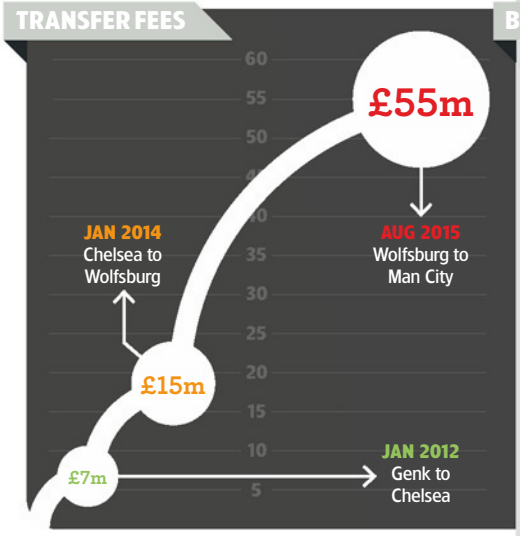

BELGIUM

35

CAPS

GOALS

9

MULTILINGUAL

HE CAN SPEAK FOUR LANGUAGES

MOST ASSISTS

EUROPE'S TOP FIVE LEAGUES IN 2014-15

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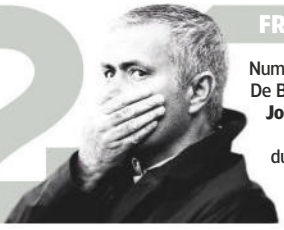

Number of times De Bruyne claims **Jose Mourinho** spoke to him during his time at Chelsea

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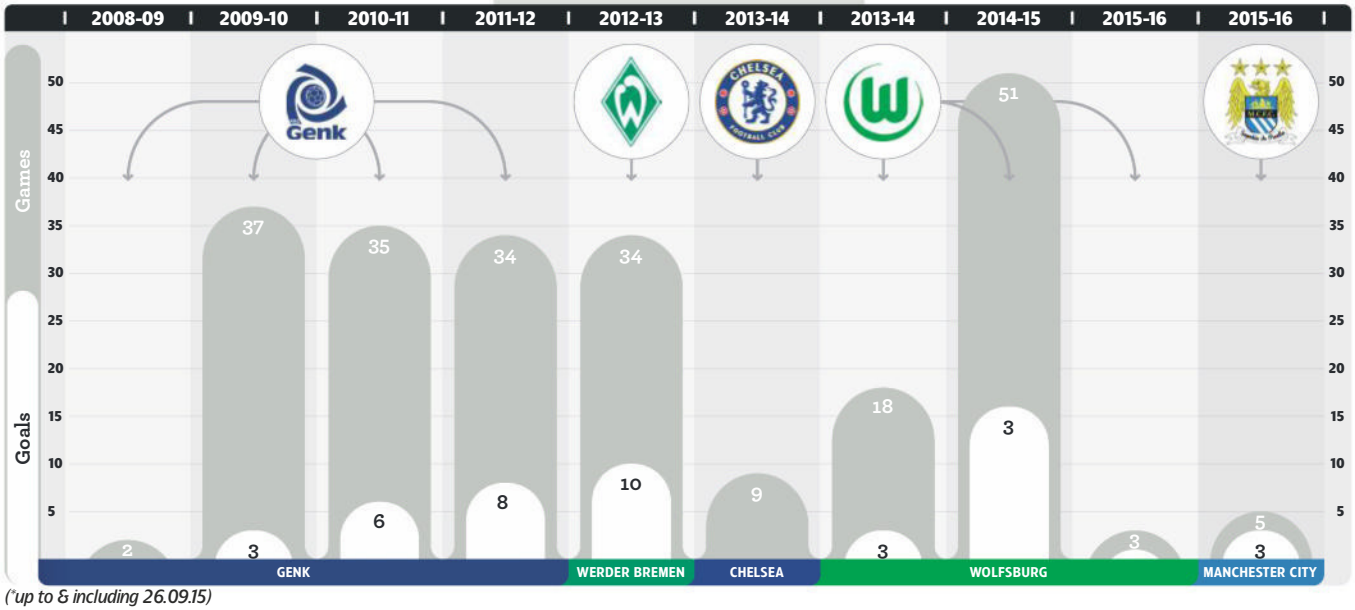
He has his own clothing line called "**KDB**" in partnership with the Cult Eleven label. A percentage of the proceeds from the line is sent to the Special Olympics.



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Van Gaal turns back the clock

Can Manchester United's Dutch coach succeed with a return to his possession-based approach of the 1990s? By Jonathan Wilson

"Fantastic," Louis Van Gaal beamed. "And then you can finish it – unbelievable! With that amount of passes you control the game. I always say to the players that the gaps in the defensive organisation shall exist when you play a kind of positional game. I was very pleased: it is confirmation of our philosophy."

He was talking about Manchester United's third goal in their recent 3-2 victory at Southampton, a remarkable strike that featured 44 passes before Bastian Schweinsteiger laid the ball through to Memphis Depay, who turned past Jose Fonte and pinged a shot off the post, the rebound falling for Juan Mata to knock it into an empty net. For the majority of those 44 passes, there had been no obvious threat; only when Schweinsteiger finally played the pass did the vaguest possibility that a goal might lie at the end of the move become apparent.

> "With that amount of passes you control the game...I was very pleased. It is confirmation of our policy"
> **Louis Van Gaal on the 44-pass goal at Southampton**

That pass, in fact, was only the second one in the whole move that had gone forward more than five yards at an angle of more than 45 degrees. The move had begun with Chris Smalling laying the ball left to Marcos Rojo and had then crossed the full width of the pitch four times before arriving with Schweinsteiger. United had worn Southampton down, their passes exerting an attritional effect, giving Van Gaal a sense of control.

That mode of play, that focus on ball retention and circulation, has come to feel slightly old-fashioned now. Pep Guardiola in recent years has tried to distance himself from "tiki taka" as he insists his teams have always passed with a purpose, have always been focused on creating chances. Others have drawn the contrast between his Barca and the Spain national side at its 2010 peak: the one possessing in Lionel Messi a player who could open defences up with individual skill, the other simply passing teams into submission.

The success of Jurgen Klopp at Borussia Dortmund and the rise of "*gegenpressing*", first in Germany and then beyond, has re-emphasised the importance of transitions in football, making the sport at the highest levels essentially one of counter-attack.

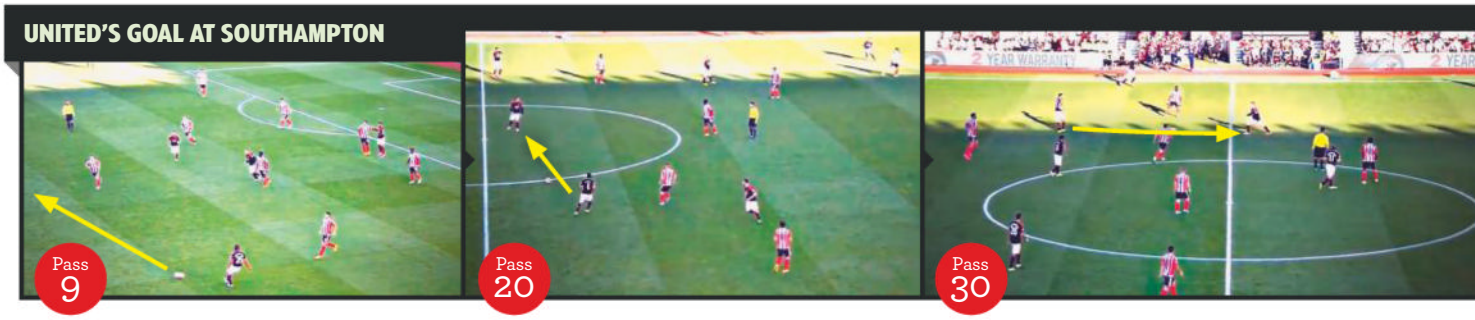
Van Gaal had dabbled with counter-attacking, first at AZ and then, more radically, with Holland at the 2014 World Cup, and has now reverted to that same philosophy, demanding a proactive defensiveness through possession. Repeatedly this season he has paused in a press conference, smiled like a kindly uncle delivering words of infinite wisdom to an impressionable nephew, and said something along the lines of, "If we have the ball, they can't score".

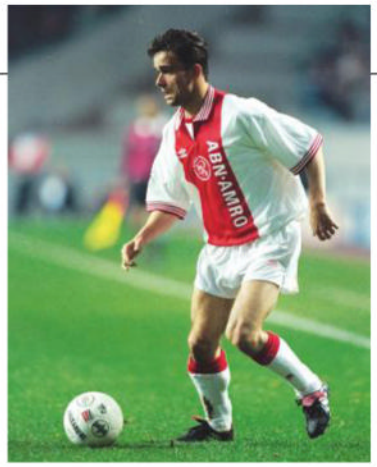
The problem with that approach, though, is twofold. Firstly, that it is not necessarily the most exciting football to watch. Much has been made of United's attacking traditions and how fans at Old Trafford expect entertainment, but it's not just at Old Trafford that the occasional staidness of his sides have provoked comment. Even as Van Gaal led Ajax to the Champions League in 1995, he faced criticism from those who remembered – or had played in – the Ajax side of the early 1970s. The winger Sjaak Swart was appalled by the way his 1990s counterparts, Finidi George and Marc Overmars, would always check back if faced with two defenders.

"I never gave the ball back to my defence, never!" he told David Winner in the book *Brilliant Orange*. "It's

Finish...Mata (in black) scores at Southampton

UNITED'S GOAL AT SOUTHAMPTON





Criticised...Ajax winger Marc Overmars

unbelievable! But that was the system with Van Gaal. Many games you are sleeping! On television, they say: 'Ajax 70 per cent ball possession'. So what? It's not football. The creativity is gone."

It was a similar story at Bayern as Van Gaal took them to the Champions League Final in 2010. "We swapped Bayern's traditional style for this high-possession game but there was still no flexibility in terms of players' positions and everyone had to stick rigidly to his own area," Paul Breitner moaned. "In some matches, we ended up with 80 per cent possession but there was no real rhythm or pace.

"After half an hour, everyone in the Allianz Arena would be yawning at this display of constant passing. Our game was well executed but very, very predictable... the basic idea was sound. What we lacked was speed and regular changes of rhythm."

But such objections, perhaps, are for purists, and so long as games are being won they can be dismissed by fans and by Van Gaal as nothing more than the grumbling of old men insistent things were better in their day. The more pragmatic issue is whether that focus on ball retention becomes inhibitive.

Van Gaal talks often and at length about his "process", the protocols players have to absorb to understand their positioning and their responsibilities, and acknowledges that it takes time before the principles are assimilated so players reacted instinctively within the parameters he has laid out. There are moments when something suddenly clicks and a Van Gaal team hits a spell of golden form – as happened, for instance, at Bayern when, after a scratchy start, his side hammered Juventus 4-1 away in early December 2009.

It looked as though it might have happened last season at United with the 3-0 win over Tottenham in March that was followed by victories over Liverpool, Aston Villa and Manchester City before an injury to Michael Carrick derailed them. But until that moment of revelation, perhaps even after, players can seem to be playing in straightjackets, overthinking everything.

United enjoyed an upturn in form after the September internationals, but is it sustainable? Is this the moment at which everything clicked or an isolated blip?

And, perhaps more intriguingly, if it is that moment of assimilation, can Van Gaal's possession-based game still prosper in the modern world of transitions? WS

Pragmatic...United boss Louis Van Gaal

FRANCE

Hosts rely on stern friendly challenge

OVERVIEW

Les Bleus have plenty of talent at their disposal as they prepare to host next summer's 24-team tournament. But their lack of competitive action makes it hard to judge their chances.

France face the perennial problem of tournament hosts – they have played only friendly matches since their World Cup quarter-final defeat by Germany. But coach Didier Deschamps insists it is not a problem as, in the past year, France have played Spain, Belgium, Portugal and Brazil, with England, Germany, Holland and Russia lined up in the coming months.

This summer, Deschamps saw young French talent fetch big money in the transfer market: Anthony Martial cost Manchester United £36m while Inter paid £26m for Geoffrey Kondogbia. Those moves, and a number of others, have the potential to unsettle Deschamps' squad.

Lyon starlet Nabil Fekir's knee injury could sideline him next summer, giving Deschamps the chance to try other options. The final squad is far from decided.

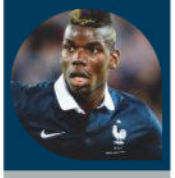
Summer move...Anthony Martial cost big money

France's most talented player of recent times, Franck Ribery will play no part next summer. The Bayern Munich winger, who missed the 2014 World Cup through injury, was criticised by Michel Platini for his international retirement but is sticking to his decision.

TACTICS

France's default formation in most of their friendlies since the World Cup has been 4-2-3-1, but without Paul Pogba 4-3-3 and 4-3-1-2 have also been tried. Yohan Cabaye, Kondogbia or Moussa Sissoko could come into a three-man midfield allowing Antoine Griezmann and Mathieu Valbuena to move further forward.

STAR MAN



Paul POGBA

The Juventus star is developing into one of the world's finest midfield all-rounders.

COACH

Didier DESCHAMPS

France's 1998 World Cup-winning captain has steadied the ship since the 2010 World Cup and extended his contract until 2018.

PLAYER PROFILE

ANTOINE GRIEZMANN

One way or another, the next few months are going to be crucial for the long-term prospects of the 24-year-old.

Despite enjoying plenty of playing time for his country over the past 18 months, the Atletico Madrid attacker has yet to fully convince for *Les Bleus* – often accused of only delivering in short spells – and there have been times when Didier Deschamps has appeared to be losing patience.

During a press conference this spring, coach Deschamps intimated Griezmann was not always as focused as he should be. He criticised him again following the 4-3 loss at home to Belgium in June. And for the first fixture of this season, a friendly in Portugal, he dropped him to make room for Lyon's Nabil Fekir, who just 14 minutes into his debut was carried off with ruptured cruciate ligaments.

As a sub for Fekir that night, Griezmann did well, and three days later he sparkled in the 2-1 victory over Serbia. But he has to be aware he can take nothing for granted. Deschamps is a tough cookie and no respecter of names or reputations.

Not that Griezmann is entirely to blame for his problems with the national side. With the shape and personnel of the side in a state of flux, many would-be Euro 2016 participants are struggling to find their bearings. And while the coach insists on playing Griezmann in wide positions, he is undoubtedly far more effective in his Atletico role of second striker.

The French football public can only hope that Griezmann proves as resilient with the national team as he was at Atletico last season, his first in the red-and-white stripes of the *Colchoneros*. Brought in for €30million from Real Sociedad, initially he could not put a foot right, forever incurring the wrath of coach Diego Simeone. However, he stuck to his task and managed to spectacularly turn it around, ending up third in the Liga scoring charts with 22 goals, the same number as Barcelona's Neymar.

Definitely one to persevere with, Didier.

Nick Bidwell

ENGLAND

Hodgson's new generation came through qualifying with flying colours

OVERVIEW

England were the only team with a 100 per cent record in the qualifiers after eight rounds. Drawn in a relatively easy group, they won their opening game, in Switzerland, to take an early lead that was never relinquished.

- Since their best Euro performance, when they reached the semi-finals on home soil in 1996, England have reached the quarter-finals twice, in 2004 and 2012.
- Hodgson survived the disappointment of the last World Cup, when England failed to get out of their group, but the FA will only discuss a new contract after next summer's tournament. "What we wanted to avoid was the slightly unsavoury position we had with Fabio Capello in 2010," says chief exec Martin Glenn.
- With Frank Lampard and Steven Gerrard retired, Hodgson has blooded a new generation of youngsters in Harry Kane, John Stones, Nathaniel Clyne, Jordan Henderson, Raheem Sterling and Ross Barkley. About to turn 30, Wayne Rooney is the elder statesman.
- Hodgson has concerns over the fitness of strikers Danny Welbeck and Daniel Sturridge. The lack of a big centre-forward means England may have finally ditched their tendency to hit panicky long balls to a target man.

Option...Harry Kane (in red) could come in up front

TACTICS

Hodgson has 4-3-3 as his preferred formation but he can also go 4-4-2 or 4-2-3-1 where Kane comes into the starting line-up in front of Rooney. Luke Shaw's double leg fracture could let Leighton Baines back in, while Jack Wilshere's fitness is an ongoing concern as he is yet to play so far this season.

STAR MAN

Wayne ROONEY

Record-breaking captain who is the all-time top scorer and has Peter Shilton's 125-cap appearance record in his sights.

COACH

Roy HODGSON

The 68-year-old took charge in May 2012 and is contracted until July 2016. An experienced, pragmatic Europhile.

PLAYER PROFILE

Reliable...Milner (right) is now first choice for Hodgson

JAMES MILNER

He may not be the most charismatic footballer ever to have graced English football, but the 29-year-old midfielder has quietly made himself indispensable to Roy Hodgson.

In an England squad blessed with such precocious starlets as Raheem Sterling, Ross Barkley and John Stones, Milner is the reliable older statesman. And with Jack Wilshere a permanent injury fixture, and Steven Gerrard and Frank Lampard seeing out their careers Stateside, he is now an automatic midfield selection for Hodgson.

An accomplished teenage sprinter and cricketer, he has quietly racked up more than 50 caps since his debut in 2009. Though his name is rarely displayed in lights, he is one of only three current England players – the others are Wayne Rooney and keeper Joe Hart – to have featured in England's last three tournament squads: for Euro 2012 and the 2010 and 2014 World Cups.

In many ways, Milner is the embodiment of Hodgson's England – a steady rather than spectacular performer who rarely steals the limelight – with versatility his biggest strength. He can play wide in a midfield three or four-man diamond, and could even be deployed in a central holding role if required.

His jack-of-all-trades tag has been hard to shake off and Milner has found himself mercilessly parodied on social media.

"You get labelled as a player – and I'm 'Boring James Milner', that's the way it is," he explains.

Having joined Manchester City from Aston Villa in 2010, he moved to Liverpool this summer and was skipper when Jordan Henderson was injured. He has also had the chance to play regularly in central midfield.

"I'd like to think you will see the best of me now I am in the central role," he says. "This move was a selfish move for me."

Hodgson, at least, could be grateful for that in France next summer.

Gavin Hamilton

CZECH REPUBLIC

Vrba restores self-belief

OVERVIEW

The Czechs made it through to the 2016 finals despite being drawn in a potentially difficult group with Holland, Turkey and Iceland. A team with few well-known stars, coach Pavel Vrba has moulded them into a side that is greater than the sum of its parts.

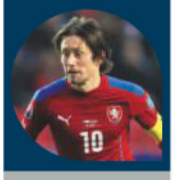
- Expectations were low at the start of the qualifying campaign but an injury-time winner in their opening game in Prague against Holland galvanised the side and they went on to win their opening four games, while their rivals struggled.
- The Czechs have an impressive record at the European Championship, winning (as Czechoslovakia) in 1976, reaching the Final in 1996, the semi-finals in 2004 and the quarter-finals in 2012. They have qualified for every tournament since 1996.
- With the exception of veterans Petr Cech and Tomas Rosicky, and highly rated wing-back Pavel Kaderabek, who joined Bundesliga club Hoffenheim last season, the bulk of the squad play in the domestic Czech league.
- Left-back David Limbersky has faced calls for him to be dropped after he crashed his car while drunk, then acknowledged a goal for club side Viktoria Plzen with a drink-driving celebration.

Start...Vaclav Pilar wheels away after scoring against Holland

TACTICS

While not quite "Total Football", Vrba favours a patient build-up with players attacking from all areas, including the full-backs Kaderabek and Limbersky. Vrba has not been afraid to change his side as he searches for an alternative to the often-injured Rosicky.

STAR MAN



Tomas ROSICKY

The Arsenal midfielder is still the main man despite his age (35) and injury problems. Won his 100th cap in June.

COACH

Pavel VRBA

In charge since early 2014 after winning Czech league titles with Viktoria Plzen. A good tactician and man-manager.

PLAYER PROFILE

Power game...Milan Skoda's aerial ability causes problems for Latvia

MILAN SKODA

In a land where fairy tales are an important part of the culture, Skoda's remarkable rise from laughing stock to national hero seems somehow appropriate.

Little more than two years ago, the 6ft 3in striker was in such poor form that Miroslav Koubek, then coach at struggling Slavia Prague, switched him to central defence. He started a league game there in October 2013 against reigning champions Viktoria Plzen and, surprisingly, the switch worked. With Skoda at the back, Slavia held Plzen to a 1-1 draw and kept clean sheets in their next three games.

"Skoda is, for me, a cornerstone of our defence," Koubek told the media.

Skoda went along with the plan but made it clear that striker remained his preferred position. But after Koubek's dismissal, new boss Alex Pastoor continued to use him in his back line until the end of the 2013-14 season.

Skoda had in fact begun his career at the back, with Slavia's neighbours Bohemians 1905, and it wasn't until 2007 that Zbynek Busta converted him into a striker.

It was only following the appointment of Miroslav Beranek as Slavia coach in the summer of 2014 that Skoda was restored to the attack – and with dramatic results. Seizing his chance, he scored five times in the first four games of the season, but, typically unassuming, he credited the transformation only to "good fortune".

Using the same skills that make him an effective defender – strength in the air and good reading of the game – Skoda ended the season with 19 goals, challenging Sparta Prague's David Lafata as the league's top scorer until the final day. That newfound ability led to Slavia reportedly turning down an offer from a Turkish club of around €700,000.

Aged 29, Skoda received his first international call-up in June this year and appeared as a late substitute in a 2-1 loss to Iceland. Then, in September, when a goal down to Kazakhstan in a vital qualifier, coach Pavel Vrba sent Skoda on at half-time in place of an ineffective Lafata. Sensationally, he scored twice to earn a 2-1 win and keep the qualification campaign on track. Three days later, the Czech Republic clinched their place in the finals with a 2-1 win in Latvia – this time with Skoda as the starting striker, and on current form a place in the Euro 2016 squad looks extremely likely.

As well as being the name of the famous Czech carmaker, Skoda's surname means "a pity" or "a shame" in Czech, making him an easy target for headline writers. These days, the newspapers make more pleasant reading.

Sam Beckwith

ICELAND

Minnows are smallest-ever finalists

OVERVIEW

Iceland became the smallest nation to qualify for a European Championship finals when they drew with Kazakhstan in September. It followed home-and-away wins over Holland, as well as victories over Turkey and the Czech Republic.

● Iceland came close to qualifying for the 2014 World Cup but lost to Croatia in a play-off in November 2013.

● Iceland has a population of just 360,000 – the same size as Coventry – and only has 21,508 registered players. But a programme of investment in facilities, including indoor and all-weather pitches, means football can be played all year round.

● Iceland have enjoyed success at under-21 level, with many of the side that reached the 2011 Euro Under-21 finals progressing to the senior side.

● Few of the senior side play in domestic football and are spread across Europe. Hannes Halldorsson is with NEC in Holland, Kolbeinn Sigthorsson moved to France this summer, while Albert Finnbogason is reviving his career at Olympiakos after it stalled at Real Sociedad. Aron Gunnarsson plays in the English second tier, while Johann Berg Gudmundsson is at Charlton Athletic and veteran Eidur Gudjonsson, now aged 37, plays in China.

Revival...Alfred Finnbogason (in blue)

TACTICS

There is no inferiority complex with Iceland, who play a well-structured 4-4-2, underpinned by an attack-minded philosophy. Midfielder Gylfi Sigurdsson can play further forward, while the veteran Gudjonsson, the country's all-time top scorer, often comes off the bench.

STAR MAN

Gylfi SIGURDSSON

The midfielder is his country's most high-profile player and is Iceland's top scorer in the qualifying campaign so far.

CO-COACHES

Lars LAGERBACK & Heimir HALLGRIMSSON

Swede Lagerbeck coached Sweden and Nigeria at World Cup finals and will hand over to his co-coach Hallgrimsson after next summer European finals.

PLAYER PROFILE

KOLBEINN SIGTHORSSON

If national coaches Lars Lagerback and Heimir Hallgrimsson were to be granted three wishes for next summer's finals, it's likely that one of the requests would be a fitness guarantee for their main striker.

Although an ever-present on the road to France, the 25-year-old's lengthy spell with Ajax, from 2011 to 2015, was littered with injuries, and on moving to French side Nantes this summer he almost immediately went to accident and emergency, involved in a car crash, which fortunately, only required minimal treatment.

In their quest to keep the surprises coming in 2016, Iceland will undoubtedly need Sigthorsson at the peak of his powers. A good mix of force and finesse, he is mobile, strong in the air and a proven marksman at this level – boasting 17 goals in 31 appearances for his country – and he is the ideal attacking focal point of the team's finely structured 4-4-2. Hard to out-muscle, he is well versed in holding the ball up and is very unselfish.

Sigthorsson, who first came to Euro-wide attention when scoring 15 Eredivisie goals for AZ in 2010-11, typifies the pronounced work ethic and energy of the Icelanders. Never pausing for breath, he will fight for every ball, show for every pass and make run after run for 90 minutes and beyond. Defenders prone to lapses in concentration may have a problem here.

Finish...Sigthorsson finds the net against the Czech Republic in June

Rumoured in recent years to be attracting interest from several quarters in England (QPR, Swansea City and West Ham United), the Reykjavik-born front man has a history of being courted by the big boys. As a talented junior with HK and Vikingur, he once counted Real Madrid and Arsenal among his admirers, and even had the chance to join the latter, only to be deterred from doing so by the bitter experience of his brother, Andri, whose career at Bayern Munich was cut short by injury while still a teenager.

Andri is now Kolbeinn's agent. How the world turns.

Nick Bidwell

River rising on red tide

WORDS: Joel Richards

The Libertadores Cup-winners' sights are set on broader horizons: the Club World Cup in Japan

Moments before the *superclasico* in Buenos Aires in September, River Plate supporters at El Monumental unveiled a vast mosaic of the flag of Japan. The flag and the club's matching colours of red and white were a convenient coincidence.

The River-Boca Juniors fixture has long failed to live up to its international billing in terms of quality, but the atmosphere still attracts attention from around the world. And yet despite the fireworks, the mosaic and the chants, the game lacked the tension that characterises these matches. River's priority was elsewhere.

Boca Juniors won the league game 1-0 and climbed to the top of the table, prompting their striker Carlos Tevez to say afterwards: "Things are back to normal."

River president Rodolfo D'Onofrio was quick to respond: "Things are not normal because ▸

Wave of emotion... River Plate fans get behind their team

MUNRO

we can't get the 20,000 tickets we need for Japan."

River are focusing on the Club World Cup in December and there is a euphoria at the club that not even losing the *superclasico* can dampen.

The club known as "the Millionaires" – due to the outlay on players in the 1930s, not the wealthy neighbourhood where the club is based – recently ended a 17-year debt to its supporters. In August, River Plate lifted the Libertadores Cup for the third time in the club's history, defeating Mexican side Tigres. They had also won the Sudamericana Cup and the South America Super Cup months earlier, meaning the club currently boasts an impressive full house of continental titles.

"We won more than we expected," sports director Enzo Francescoli admitted to *La Nacion*. "The idea was to win one title per year."

The Uruguayan, who was so admired as a player that Zinedine Zidane named his son after him, arrived as sports director in 2013 after club presidential elections. The new administration won the 2014 league title and the Argentina Super Cup under coach Ramon Diaz. But after Diaz suddenly quit, Francescoli opted for one-time attacking midfielder Marcelo Gallardo as his replacement after sounding out Gerardo Martino.

> "There is nothing more beautiful than getting used to winning"
> River coach Marcelo Gallardo

"River has very successful cases of former players returning as coach to the club," says vice-president Matias Patanian. "It is a tradition at our club."

Now in his late 30s, Gallardo was a stylish playmaker who grew up at River and formed part of the generation of youth-team players – along with Hernan Crespo, Ariel Ortega and Matias Almeyda – that enjoyed great success in the 1990s. After retiring, he had a short spell as a coach in Uruguay with Nacional, staying there long enough to win the league title. But in the 13 months since returning to River as coach, he has transformed the club, guiding the team to three major international trophies.

"There is nothing more beautiful than getting used to winning," Gallardo said in Japan after his team won yet another piece of silverware – the less-valued but fourth official international title of the year, the somewhat obscure Suruga Cup.

Gallardo may have inherited a side that were league champions, but he still managed to improve their performance levels – while modernising the back-room set-up to include a neuroscience specialist – and promptly went about breaking club records, emulating the club's legendary side of the 1940s, "The Machine".

Bringing to an end nearly two decades

Commitment...a *superclasico* encounter with bitter rivals Boca Juniors during the Libertadores Cup

On route...River fans take the bus to El Monumental for a league encounter

Leading by example...current coach Marcelo Gallardo celebrates scoring for River in August 2006

without a continental title, Gallardo praised his squad's ability to "interpret how they had to play". This interpretation pointed to a certain pragmatism.

Though Gallardo began fielding a classic number 10 behind two strikers, when it came to the cup competitions his team was more physical and robust than in previous months. In the Libertadores Cup, River had more shots than any other team in the competition, but also committed more fouls than any other.

The Libertadores and Sudamericana Cup victories took on an even greater level of enjoyment as the club beat Boca Juniors on the way to both Finals. But the wider context for this unprecedented success is how steep River's climb has been in the last four years.

In the club museum and in the hall at El Monumental are cabinets crammed with silverware won during the club's distinguished history. But one of those trophies is a reminder of River Plate's lowest point: the trophy for 2012 second division champions.

The scenes from the riots on the day that River Plate were relegated in 2011 were broadcast around the world. The club had imploded under Daniel Passarella, the 1978 World Cup-winning captain who, as president, had failed to replicate the success he had enjoyed with the team as a player and a coach.

For one season, River suffered the indignity of travelling to corners of Argentina usually accustomed only to lower-league football. The barrage of insults from opposing fans centred around a weak pun on the name of the second division, the B Nacional, calling them "RiBer".

"It wasn't pressure," striker Alejandro Dominguez said a few months after winning promotion, "but rather a responsibility to carry so many years

RIVER PLATE KEY DATES

1901 Club founded

1920 Win first Primera title

1932 Complete the Primera and the Competencia Cup double

1941 Claim four titles: the league, the Aldao Cup, the Ibarguren Cup and the Dr Ricardo Aldao Cup

1957-75 Eighteen years without a trophy

1986 Win the Libertadores Cup for the first time

2011 Relegated for the first time in their history

2012 Promoted back to top flight

2014 National champions for a record 36th time

2015 Win a third Libertadores and become the first club to hold three continental trophies (Libertadores, Sudamericana and Recopa)

HONOURS

World Club Cup (1)	1986
Libertadores Cup (3)	1986, 1996, 2015
Sudamericana Super Cup (1)	1997
Sudamericana Cup (1)	2014
Recopa Sudamericana (1)	2015
Copa Interamericana (1)	1986
Suruga Bank Championship (1)	2015
Campeonato Cup (1)	2014

WON NATIONAL TITLE 36 TIMES

1920 AAM
1932 PRIMERA
1936 COPA CAMPEONATO
1936 COPA DE ORO
1937 PRIMERA
1941 PRIMERA
1942 PRIMERA
1945 PRIMERA
1947 PRIMERA
1952 PRIMERA
1953 PRIMERA
1955 PRIMERA
1956 PRIMERA
1957 PRIMERA
1975 NACIONAL
1975 METROPOLITANO
1977 METROPOLITANO
1979 METROPOLITANO
1979 NACIONAL
1980 METROPOLITANO
1981 NACIONAL
1985-86 PRIMERA
1989-90 PRIMERA
1993 APERTURA
1994 APERTURA
1996 APERTURA
1997 APERTURA
1999 APERTURA
2000 CLAUSURA
2002 CLAUSURA
2003 CLAUSURA
2004 CLAUSURA
2008 CLAUSURA
2014 FINAL

Competencia Jockey Club Cup (1)	1914
Competencia Cup (1)	1932
Dr Carlos Ibarguren Cup (4)	1937, 1941, 1942, 1952
Adrian C Escobar Cup (1)	1941
Primera B Nacional (1)	2011–12
Primera B (1)	1908
Dr Ricardo Aldao Cup (5)	1936, 1937, 1941, 1945, 1947
Tie Cup (1)	1914

of history, and do what we had promised, which was to take River back to the first division."

Dominguez had returned with Fernando Cavenaghi, both offering to play for what the club could afford to pay them, in order to help the team win promotion. Midway through the season, life-long supporter and former France international David Trezeguet did the same.

Although the three failed to combine in attack quite as effectively as had been hoped, their goals were enough to take River back up to the first division.

A brace from Trezeguet on the final day of the season in 2012 secured promotion; just two years later, River won the first division title. After a bout of retrospective title awarding by AFA that benefited several clubs, it added up to be River's 36th league title – a national record.

> "It wasn't pressure, but rather a responsibility to carry so many years of history"
>
> River striker Alejandro Dominguez on promotion

The bust-boom cycle does, however, have a precedent at the club.

In 1983, Argentina was in transition with the military dictatorship exiting power. At River Plate, the idol and one of Argentinian football's all-time top goalscorers Angel Labruna passed away. Matchday attendances were down to four figures, the club was unable to pay wages and the first-team players went on strike.

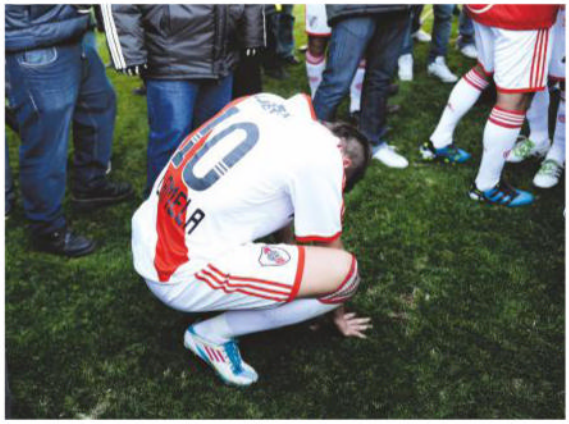
For seven league games River fielded a youth-team XI, winning just two matches and the Millionaires finished 19th. But 1983 was also the year that relegation averages were installed, following San Lorenzo's demotion in 1981.

Avoiding relegation through the new league structure, River promptly underwent a revolution. With a new board, a new set of players and with playmaker Beto Alonso repatriated, just three years later, in 1986, River won the league championship, the Libertadores Cup and the World Club Cup. Three members of that team – Oscar Ruggeri, Nery Pumpido and Hector Enrique – added the World Cup titles with the national team in Mexico that year.

"1986 is a trademark," wrote Alonso years later, "that is etched on all our memories." One publication dedicated to the club is called, simply, 1986.

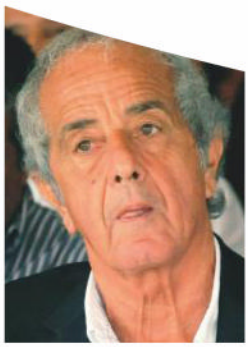
Upon winning the club elections in 2013, the current board tapped into the club's lineage and tradition. Amadeo ▸

Going up...River seal promotion with a 2-0 win against Almirante Brown


Dark times...Erik Lamela is overcome after River are relegated in 2011

THE POWER CURVE

The key figures behind River Plate



RODOLFO D'ONOFRIO
Club president
Elected in 2013, four years after losing to Daniel Passerella. With a strong CV in business, he promotes a "comprehensive project" that includes success on the pitch, while building up the club's social role.

ENZO FRANCESCOLI
Sports director
Not all clubs in Argentina have someone in this position, but the Uruguayan has proved how valuable it can be.

MARCELO GALLARDO
Coach
Ambitious and innovative, he has demonstrated strong leadership and tactical knowledge, as well as smart work in the transfer market.

MATIAS PATANIAN
Vice-president
An experienced director who has built a team looking to modernise and bring a more professional administration to the club.

BETO ALONSO
Former player
He was vital in harnessing support from the slightly older generations for D'Onofrio in the elections. One of the club's most distinguished players.

THE STADIUM

Atmospheric... match day at El Monumental

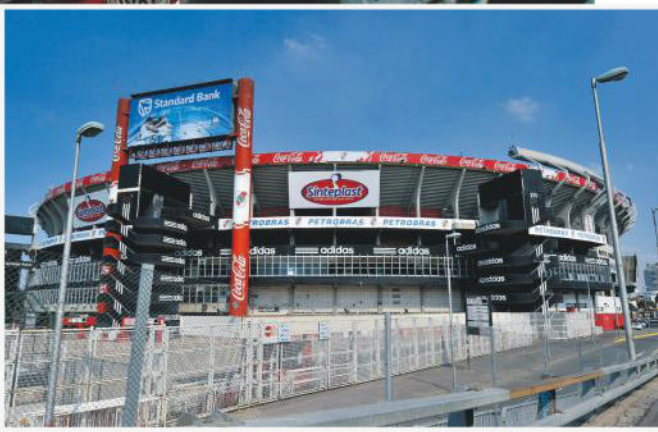
Steeped in history, the Estadio Antonio Vespucio Liberti, known popularly as El Monumental, was built nine years before the Bernabeu, 19 before the Camp Nou and hosted the 1978 World Cup Final.

One of the seven top-flight clubs in Buenos Aires, River Plate's stadium is a short drive from *superclasico* rivals Boca Juniors' equally iconic La Bombonera.

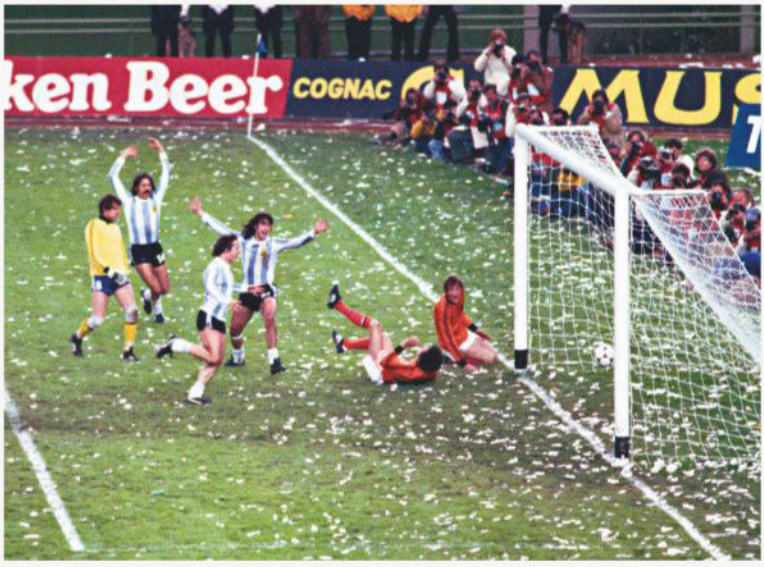
Built as a sports arena rather than just a football stadium – hence the running track around the pitch – there is constant talk of El Monumental getting a facelift, even if expansion seems a long way off.

The clock above the stand named after striker Omar Sivori, installed for the 1978 World Cup, has recently been upgraded and the old sign above the main entrance – below which thousands of supporters, tourists and new signings have had their photo taken – has finally been replaced with a new one.

Minor cosmetic changes maybe, but perhaps a sign that River are looking to revamp their home's image.



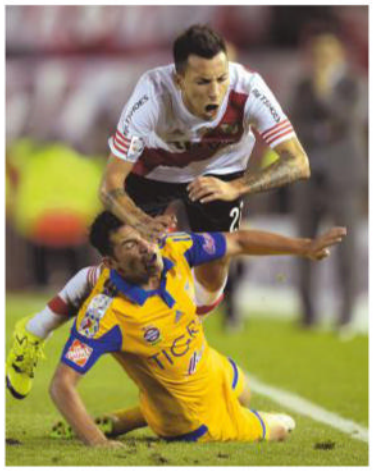
Landmark...the approach to the stadium



Historic...the stadium staged the 1978 World Cup Final in which Argentina beat Holland 3-1

Carrizo, the legendary goalkeeper now in his 80s, was named honorary president, a role given to his former team-mate Alfredo Di Stefano at Real Madrid. Alonso, the emblematic playmaker from the all-conquering 1986 team, was handed an advisory role to the president. Ariel Ortega, who like Alonso had been distanced from the club, was named reserve-team coach. Perhaps most crucially, Francescoli, who was captain of the 1996 Libertadores Cup-winning side was named sporting director.

"Doing this was very important," says vice-president Patanian. "We had to bring the riverplatense family, which had not been united for several years, back together. But also we wanted to bring an identity and sense of belonging back to the club."



Painful...Leonel Vangini takes a tumble

As a member of the successful 1990s team, and as a player who worked his way up through the club's youth system, Gallardo is well schooled in the River Plate way. He recently quashed speculation of a possible move by signing a deal to keep him at River until 2017, but he has also admitted that he must "reinvent" the team.

River recently sold defender Ramiro Funes Mori to Everton, and midfielder Matias Kranevitter will join Atletico Madrid in January. Theses sales brought in £15.2million, and though River receives only a percentage of those fees, it is much-needed cash that helps service the club's debt.

As good as it gets... the squad celebrate after beating Tigres of Mexico to win the Libertadores Cup

At roughly £25.7m, the debt is a fraction of those facing many European clubs – but then so too is River's income compared to those in Europe. Along with Boca Juniors, River receive less than £3m a year from television rights. As well as club finances, there are other problems, not least the persistent plague of the *barra brava*. Last November, over 100 of these supporters fought with knives at the club restaurant on a weekday afternoon in front of hundreds of club members.

> "River has very successful cases of former players returning as coach to the club. It is a tradition at River"
>
> Vice-president Matias Patanian

Yet the complications that face the club are minimised, for now, by recent success. The club museum announced a record number of visits in July and museum director, Rodrigo Daskal, says he was misquoted as saying that there was not enough room for all the new trophies, but adds the board has raised the profile of the museum. "This is a historic time for us," says Daskal, "but winning so much in one year is not normal. Very few Argentinian clubs have ever done so."

One of the clubs to have enjoyed such sustained success are River Plate's fierce rivals Boca, who won four Libertadores Cups, plus two Intercontinental trophies, in the 2000s. While River have more league titles than any other, they admit their international record needs improving.

The past 18 months have transformed that international record. The success also, in part, banished the memory of the second division. Just three-and-a-half years after returning to the top flight, the club is now preparing for what it hopes will be a Club World Cup Final against Barcelona in Japan. **WS**

THE COACH

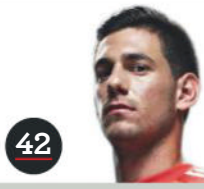
MARCELO GALLARDO
Age 39 (18.01.76)
Took charge in June 2014 and renewed his contract this August, tying him to the club until 2017. Had three spells with the club as a player, winning six league titles, plus the Libertadores and Sudamericana Cups. Also played in France for Monaco and Paris Saint-Germain, and won 44 caps for Argentina, scoring 13 international goals.

THE KIT

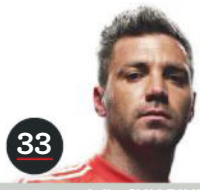
THE SQUAD

GOALKEEPERS

1 Marcelo BAROVERO
Age 31 (18.02.84)
Reliable and consistent – if not imposing – stopper who joined from Velez Sarsfield, initially on a season's loan, and is a fans' favourite.



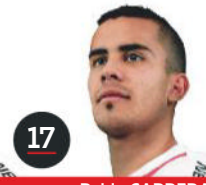
42 Augusto BATALLA
Age 19 (30.04.96)
Highly rated under-20 international who turned down a move to Real Madrid in the summer.



33 Julio CHIARINI
Age 33 (04.03.82)
Back-up who has managed an impressive run of clean sheets when called upon.

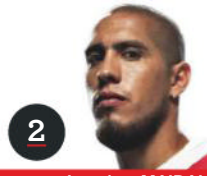
DEFENDERS

3 Eder ALVAREZ (Col)
Age 22 (28.02.93)
Promising, tough centre-back who fell out of favour under Gallardo but was called up to Colombia's World Cup squad last year.



17 Pablo CARRERAS
Age 20 (03.03.95)
Right-back who has been capped at youth level but has made limited first-team appearances.

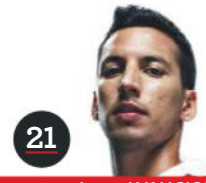
20 Milton CASCO
Age 27 (11.04.88)
A recent signing from Newell's Old Boys, the full-back is comfortable on either flank and has been on the brink of a national call-up.



2 Jonathan MAIDANA
Age 20 (29.07.85)
The only survivor from the team that was relegated in 2011, the centre-back started his career at Boca Juniors but now has a River Plate tattoo.

24 Emanuel MAMMANA
Age 19 (10.02.96)
Can play in the centre or right-back. Like Javier Mascherano before him, he played for the national team before making his River Plate debut.

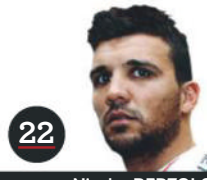
25 Gabriel MERCADO
Age 28 (18.03.87)
Attacking right-back who has been a regular in defence in recent seasons. Missed the Libertadores Final through suspension.



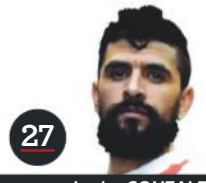
21 Leonel VANGIONI
Age 28 (05.05.87)
Former Newell's Old Boys midfielder who was converted into an attacking full-back at River. Created the opening goal in the Libertadores Final.

28 Leandro VEGA
Age 19 (27.05.96)
Highly rated product of River's youth system who has featured for Argentina at junior levels.

MIDFIELDERS



22 Nicolas BERTOLO
Age 29 (02.01.86)
Attacking midfielder who was signed from Banfield for the Libertadores, although injury kept him out of the side.



27 Lucho GONZALEZ
Age 34 (19.01.81)
Former international who won the league with River in 2003 and 2004, and returned after a long career in Europe for the Libertadores Cup run-in.

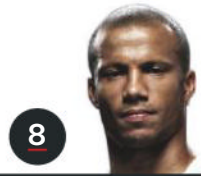
5 Matias KRANEVITTER
Age 22 (21.05.93)
Was recently signed by Atletico Madrid for €8m but will not leave until after the Club World Cup in January. Made his international debut in August.

10 Gonzalo MARTINEZ
Age 22 (13.06.93)
Talented left-sided attacking midfielder signed from Huracan who is yet to fully realise his promise.

18 Camilo MAYADA (Uru)
Age 24 (08.01.91)
Right-sided midfielder who had to play at right-back in the Libertadores Final.

15 Leonardo PISCULICHI
Age 31 (18.01.84)
Well-travelled playmaker who was key to the Sudamericana campaign but has since fallen out of favour.

23 Leonardo PONZIO
Age 33 (29.01.82)
Defensive midfielder who returned to River when they were in the second tier and was a vital cog in the Libertadores-winning side.



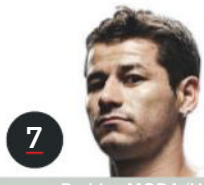
8 Carlos SANCHEZ (Uru)
Age 30 (02.12.84)
Arrived at River after they were relegated and scored in the Libertadores Final. The wide midfielder is now part of Uruguay's national squad.

14 Augusto SOLARI
Age 23 (03.01.92)
Wide midfielder who is sometimes employed at full-back. A cousin of the former River and Real Madrid winger Santiago Solari.

FORWARDS

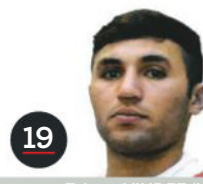
13 Lucas ALARIO
Age 23 (08.10.92)
Low profile signing who became a hero in the Libertadores, scoring in the semi-final and Final.

32 Sebastian DRIUSSI
Age 19 (09.02.96)
His spectacular overhead goal for Argentina's under-17s went viral, but has yet to make his mark with River. Gallardo often plays him in a deeper role.



7 Rodrigo MORA (Uru)
Age 27 (29.10.87)
Hero with River supporters for his knack of scoring against Boca Juniors and his goal in the Libertadores semi-final.

11 Javier SAVIOLA
Age 33 (11.12.81)
Former international and part of River's title-winning side in the early 2000s. Returned in June after 14 years in Europe. Olympic 2004 gold medallist.



19 Tabare VIUDEZ (Uru)
Age 26 (08.09.89)
Made his River debut in the Libertadores semi-final after three years in Turkey with Kasimpasa. Played under Gallardo for Uruguay's Nacional.

(All ages as of 09.10.15)

World Soccer vintage 34 years ago

October 1981

Each month we look back through the *World Soccer* archives

Trevor Francis, the British game's first £1million footballer, was on the October 1981 cover after his latest shock transfer, for £1.2m from Nottingham Forest to Manchester City. In our editorial leader we advocated that transfers during the English season should be banned.

The main news from South America centred around the impact that a certain young Argentinian player by the name of Diego Maradona was having on the championship in his homeland.

Eric Weil reported: "Maradona, who led Argentinos Juniors to second place last year, behind nine-point winners River Plate, might well have taken them to the championship this year, ahead of faltering River Plate, but he moved to Boca Juniors and the title moved with him.

"Maradona shone less because he had more to do at Boca Juniors. The year before, all Argentinos Juniors played for him and gave the ball to him.

"At Boca Juniors he had to look for it and cover a lot more ground in defence and attack.

"While Boca started off well with [Miguel Angel] Brindisi linking up beautifully with Maradona, the link did not last and the team struggled for the rest of the way, but so did the rest.

"As most other leading candidates [for the title] were highly erratic, Boca Juniors somehow maintained their lead. Maradona was seen only in flashes – as he was heavily marked and continually fouled – but those flashes were enough as they generally led to goals.

"I can't see any other reason why they won the title and it came as no surprise that Argentinos Juniors, instead of challenging for the top with Maradona, only just avoided relegation without him."

Maradona had joined Argentinos Juniors at the age of eight and had spent five seasons playing in the first team before joining Boca in February 1981.

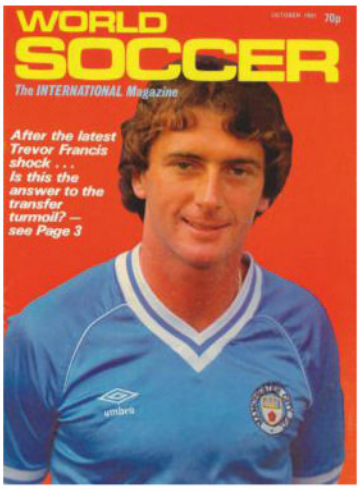
However, that year's league title victory would be his only championship success in his native Argentina – and that was down to one narrow victory during the run-in.

As Weil pointed out in his report: "It might not have been a championship fight at all if it had not been for FC Oeste, one of the few financially sound clubs, which ended up only a point behind and might have been worthy champions.

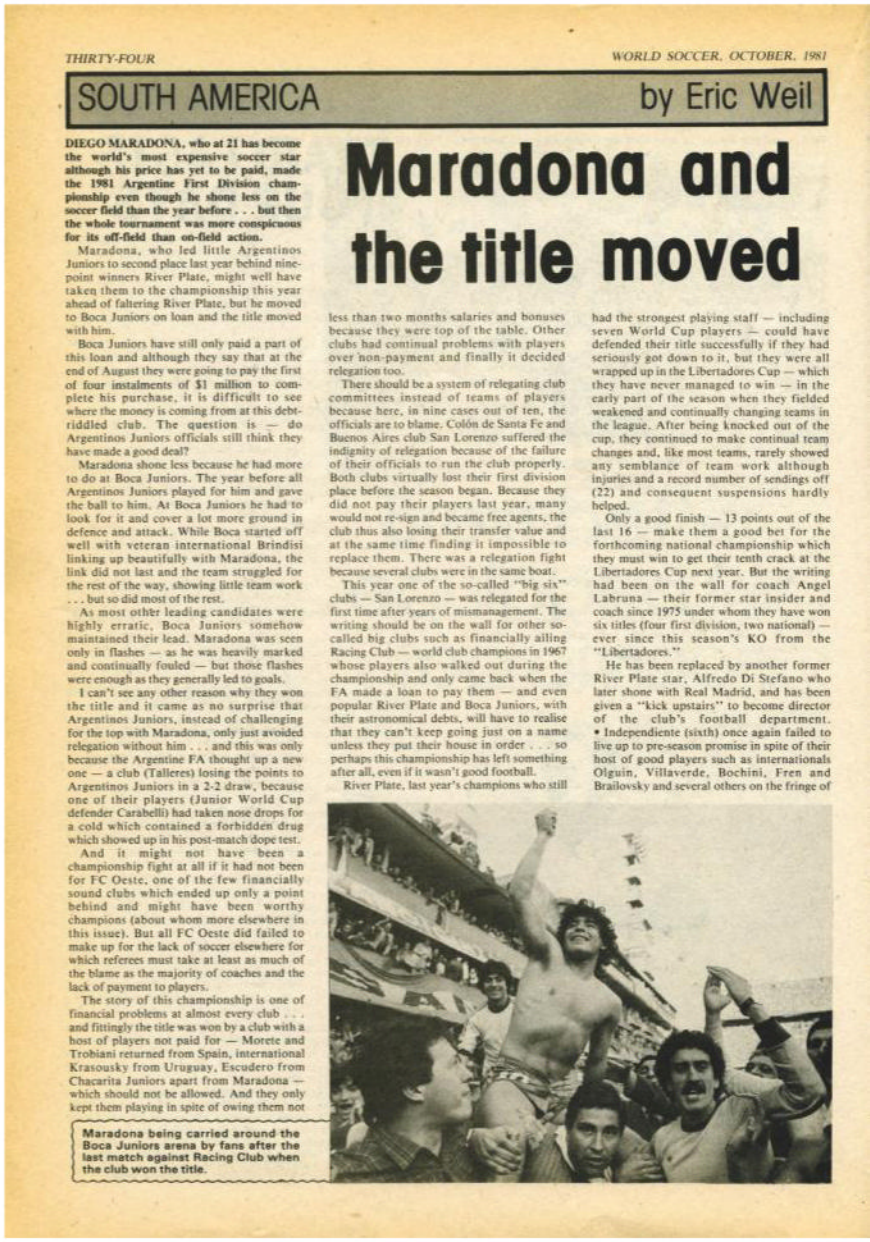
"In the end the title hinged on the meeting of Boca Juniors and FC Oeste, three games before the end of the championship.

"Boca won 1-0 with FC Oeste looking the better team but failing to take the few chances they created. Boca had just about one, served up by Maradona, whose centre left [Hugo] Perotti [was] in an excellent position to score."

The following year, after the World Cup in which he got sent off against Italy, Maradona left Boca and moved to Europe to sign for Barcelona. WS



Switch...Maradona moved to Boca and the league title would soon follow



THIRTY-FOUR WORLD SOCCER, OCTOBER, 1981

SOUTH AMERICA by Eric Weil

Maradona and the title moved

DIEGO MARADONA, who at 21 has become the world's most expensive soccer star although his price has yet to be paid, made the 1981 Argentine First Division championship even though he shone less on the soccer field than the year before . . . but then the whole tournament was more conspicuous for its off-field than on-field action.

Maradona, who led little Argentinos Juniors to second place last year behind nine-point winners River Plate, might well have taken them to the championship this year ahead of faltering River Plate, but he moved to Boca Juniors on loan and the title moved with him.

Boca Juniors have still only paid a part of this loan and although they say that at the end of August they were going to pay the first of four instalments of $1 million to complete his purchase, it is difficult to see where the money is coming from at this debt-riddled club. The question is — do Argentinos Juniors officials still think they have made a good deal?

Maradona shone less because he had more to do at Boca Juniors. The year before all Argentinos Juniors played for him and gave the ball to him. At Boca Juniors he had to look for it and cover a lot more ground in defence and attack. While Boca started off well with veteran international Brindisi linking up beautifully with Maradona, the link did not last and the team struggled for the rest of the way, showing little team work . . . but so did most of the rest.

As most other leading candidates were highly erratic, Boca Juniors somehow maintained their lead. Maradona was seen only in flashes — as he was heavily marked and continually fouled — but those flashes were enough as they generally led to goals.

I can't see any other reason why they won the title and it came as no surprise that Argentinos Juniors, instead of challenging for the top with Maradona, only just avoided relegation without him . . . and this was only because the Argentine FA thought up a new one — a club (Talleres) losing the points to Argentinos Juniors in a 2-2 draw, because one of their players (Junior World Cup defender Carabelli) had taken nose drops for a cold which contained a forbidden drug which showed up in his post-match dope test.

And it might not have been a championship fight at all if it had not been for FC Oeste, one of the few financially sound clubs which ended up only a point behind and might have been worthy champions (about whom more elsewhere in this issue). But all FC Oeste did failed to make up for the lack of soccer elsewhere for which referees must take at least as much of the blame as the majority of coaches and the lack of payment to players.

The story of this championship is one of financial problems at almost every club . . . and fittingly the title was won by a club with a host of players not paid for — Morete and Trobiani returned from Spain, international Krasousky from Uruguay, Escudero from Chacarita Juniors apart from Maradona — which should not be allowed. And they only kept them playing in spite of owing them not less than two months salaries and bonuses because they were top of the table. Other clubs had continual problems with players over non-payment and finally it decided relegation too.

There should be a system of relegating club committees instead of teams of players because here, in nine cases out of ten, the officials are to blame. Colón de Santa Fe and Buenos Aires club San Lorenzo suffered the indignity of relegation because of the failure of their officials to run the club properly. Both clubs virtually lost their first division place before the season began. Because they did not pay their players last year, many would not re-sign and became free agents, the club thus also losing their transfer value and at the same time finding it impossible to replace them. There was a relegation fight because several clubs were in the same boat.

This year one of the so-called "big six" clubs — San Lorenzo — was relegated for the first time after years of mismanagement. The writing should be on the wall for other so-called big clubs such as financially ailing Racing Club — world club champions in 1967 whose players also walked out during the championship and only came back when the FA made a loan to pay them — and even popular River Plate and Boca Juniors, with their astronomical debts, will have to realise that they can't keep going just on a name unless they put their house in order . . . so perhaps this championship has left something after all, even if it wasn't good football.

River Plate, last year's champions who still had the strongest playing staff — including seven World Cup players — could have defended their title successfully if they had seriously got down to it, but they were all wrapped up in the Libertadores Cup — which they have never managed to win — in the early part of the season when they fielded weakened and continually changing teams in the league. After being knocked out of the cup, they continued to make continual team changes and, like most teams, rarely showed any semblance of team work although injuries and a record number of sendings off (22) and consequent suspensions hardly helped.

Only a good finish — 13 points out of the last 16 — make them a good bet for the forthcoming national championship which they must win to get their tenth crack at the Libertadores Cup next year. But the writing had been on the wall for coach Angel Labruna — their former star insider and coach since 1975 under whom they have won six titles (four first division, two national) — ever since this season's KO from the "Libertadores."

He has been replaced by another former River Plate star, Alfredo Di Stefano who later shone with Real Madrid, and has been given a "kick upstairs" to become director of the club's football department.

• Independiente (sixth) once again failed to live up to pre-season promise in spite of their host of good players such as internationals Olguin, Villaverde, Bochini, Fren and Brailovsky and several others on the fringe of

Maradona being carried around the Boca Juniors arena by fans after the last match against Racing Club when the club won the title.

> **"All Argentinos Juniors played for him and gave the ball to him. At Boca, he had to look for it and cover a lot more ground"**
>
> Eric Weil on Maradona's early club career

WORLD SOCCER, OCTOBER, 1981 — THIRTY-FIVE

Argentine First Division Champions Boca Juniors. Standing left to right: Mouzo, Pasucci, Gatti, Ruggeri, Brindisi. Kneeling: Escudero, Benitez, Suarez, Maradona, Perotti, Gordoba.

international selection . . . but they seem to lack the fighting spirit of their predecessors who won the Libertadores Cup a record six times.

• In the end the title hinged on the meeting of Boca Juniors and FC Oeste three games before the end of the championship. Home team Boca won 1-0 with FC Oeste looking the better team, but failing to take the few chances they created. Boca had just about one served up by Maradona whose centre left Perotti in an excellent position to score.

The result left Boca Juniors three points ahead and they could have won the title the following week with a point at Rosario Central. Losing 1-0 they were awarded a penalty which Maradona, for the first time this season, missed. (Boca — Maradona and Brindisi — had previously converted all eight penalties awarded.) FC Oeste meanwhile were coasting with a 3-0 lead against Huracan, but let it slip away — veteran midfielder Babington had a lot to do with it — and it ended 3-3, leaving Boca two points ahead.

On the final day Boca struggled again for a 1-1 draw against Racing and Maradona scored from a penalty (for a foul on himself) and three Boca and two Racing players were sent off — and we had the strange spectacle of an impending champion playing in front of its own already celebrating fans kicking the ball anywhere out of defence to waste time against a dominant Racing. FC Oeste, meanwhile, not making the same mistake as the week before, coasted to a 3-0 win over Platense, but it was too late.

And the tricks they got up to to avoid relegation . . .

Colon told their former player Leroyer — who, because of non-payment of salaries left as a free agent and signed for Racing — to turn up and play for them because the Santa Fe league, to which Colon is also affiliated, had not given Leroyer a clearance certificate. Colon then claimed the points against Racing when Leroyer played for the latter and they also asked the FA not to allow Maradona to play for Boca against them because he had not been paid for.

In the match against Boca Juniors, Colon players walked off in the second half when losing 2-0 and claimed the referee had insulted them. He was even taken to the police station under a Santa Fe law for "causing a public disturbance." The Colon players were later all suspended and the club had to play its last two games with reserves and asked the FA to annul the championship because of a number of irregularities.

Talleres successfully petitioned the FA not to allow their former defender Van Tuyne and midfielder Berta play against them for their new club Racing because the latter had not paid the transfer fees.

San Lorenzo club's ball boys, at home matches, were instructed by coach Juan Carlos Lorenzo to waste time when convenient and in one instance a ball boy even ran on to the field to catch a ball intended for an opposing forward in a position to score.

STATISTICALLY

• *Boca Juniors easily drew the biggest crowds, their gates often being twice as big as those of the second highest, but in a country where club members get in free, they played to only an average of 32,406 paying spectators per match.*

• *Boca Juniors had only one ever-present in their 34 games — defender Cordoba — while Maradona, due to injury, played 28 matches.*

• *789 goals were scored at an average of 2.58 per game. River Plate were top scorers with 62, FC Oeste had the best defence (20), Colon and Argentinos Juniors the worst (59) and Colon were the lowest scorers (26) in 34 games.*

• *Leading individual scorer was Instituto Cordoba's Chaparro (20), followed by Carrasco (Racing) 18 and Maradona (Boca Jrs) 17.*

• *129 penalties were awarded, 104 converted (Sarmiento 10, Boca Juniors 9) 18 saved (Vidalle, Estudiantes, 3), seven missed.*

• *179 players sent off — River Plate 22, Boca Juniors and Argentinos Juniors 15.*

• *The 51 professional first division titles (since 1931) have been won by River Plate 16, Boca Juniors 12, Independiente 7, Racing Club 6, San Lorenzo 5, Estudiantes de La Plata, Chacarita Juniors, Huracan, Newell's Old Boys and Quilmes once each.*

IN PERU, modest provincial clubs Alfonso Ugarte from Puno and Melgar from Arequipa top the championship with 16 and 15 points after 10 matches — the latter being still unbeaten — which isn't exactly keeping fans interest at fever pitch.

At a recent match between home team Atletico Chalaco and Leon de Huanuco there were only 58 paying spectators which perhaps reflects on the kind of football Chalaco has been playing. Their goals record in 10 matches was 7-4.

* * *

BRAZIL'S Waldir Pereira "Didi", a former World Cup star and more recently coach of Kuwait, has come home to coach Cruzeiro, a leading club of Bello Horizonte and Libertadores Cup winners in 1976 who want to get back to the "big time."

Flamengo, although virtually in the semi-finals of this year's "Libertadores", have fired their coach Dino Sani because of differences he had with players and they hoped to sign Nelson de Rosa Martins "Nelsinho", coach of the Brazilian junior national team earlier this year who just resigned from Fluminense, Flamengo's great Rio rivals, because of misunderstandings with club officials. Joao Carlos Camargo is the new coach at Fluminense.

* * *

IN Colombia, Millionarios of Bogota and Nacional of Medellin, who shared second place in the season's opening championship behind America de Cali, played off for the second final round place as runners-up, each winning their home leg, but the Bogota club qualified on better goal difference.

The second part of the championship has now started with Nacional being the only club with full points from two games.

* * *

IN Chile Colo Colo lead champions Cobreloa after six games by the two bonus points carried into the first division championship for winning a pre-season tournament, both teams having 4-1-1 records.

* * *

IN Ecuador, Barcelona of Guayaquil, with pending matches all season because of their participation in the Libertadores Cup, came from behind to win the first stage of the championship on goal difference.

On the last day they beat leaders — for most of the season — Liga Deportiva Universitaria 1-0 to catch them up at the top, although the general opinion was that the vital goal was off-side.

This left Barcelona with a better goal difference and one more pending game against Nacional in which only a heavy defeat would have robbed them of first place.

They lost 1-0 with a controversial penalty, but it was good enough to leave them in first place, while Tecnico Universitario of Ambato, last year's vice-champions, were relegated, together with Universidad de Portoviejo for the second stage of the championship.

The top three — Barcelona, Liga Deportiva Universitaria and Nacional in that order — qualify for the end of season final round with three, two and one bonus point respectively, while the second stage of the championship will also qualify the top three (which could be all or some of the same teams).

Also in this issue...

p4-5 Paul Parish reported on the aftermath of England's 2-1 World Cup qualifying defeat away to Norway, commenting: "The explanations for another night of national misery have been superficial rather than sensible. If England do reach the World Cup finals in Spain next year it will be courtesy of other nations' failures and not by their own creation."

ENGLAND MUST LEARN FROM UPSET

The Big IF...

report by Paul Parish

MATCH ANALYSIS

Ron Greenwood quote

p6 Still on a World Cup theme, Eric Weil reported on Peru's selection policy that secured them a surprise place at the 1982 tournament in place of the more fancied Uruguay. He wrote: "Peru, at quite some expense, brought back a collection of ageing players, but with quite a bit of international experience [including] Teofilo Cubillas (31) and the 39-year-old evergreen defender [Hector] Chumpitaz. [Both players] were in the 1970 squad that reached the quarter-finals and lined up for Peru [in the 1978 tournament] when they beat Scotland 3-1."

Peru—age didn't matter

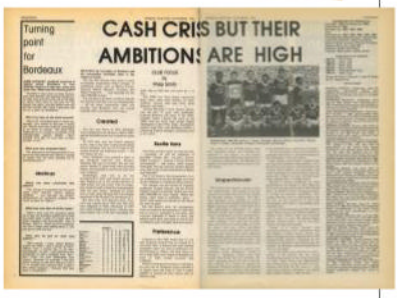
p15 New Zealand forward Steve Sumner scored six goals as the Kiwis recorded a 13-0 win at home to Fiji in the World Cup qualifiers, setting a new record win for the qualifying campaign.

NEW ZEALAND PROGRESS IS A MIRACLE!

The manager

Match that made history

p18-19 Philip Smith noted that Bordeaux coach Aime Jacquet, who led France to World Cup glory in 1998, had two future stars in his ranks. He pointed out: "In years to come the Giresse-Tigana tandem should become one of the great French midfield partnerships."



Turning point for Bordeaux

CASH CRISIS BUT THEIR AMBITIONS ARE HIGH

10 years ago

Robinho had become the latest *galactico* to join the ranks at Real Madrid. The Spanish club had signed the 21-year-old from Santos in Brazil and he was soon linking up with Raul, Zinedine Zidane, David Beckham and fellow countryman Ronaldo at the Bernabeu.

20 years ago

English champions Blackburn Rovers, under coach Ray Harford, were in the group phase of the Champions League. Teamed with Spartak Moscow, Legia Warsaw and Rosenborg, they lost their first three games of the campaign and failed to progress to the knockout stage.

30 years ago

The star trio of Zbigniew Boniek, Paolo Rossi and Marco Tardelli – who all played in the winning European Cup team just months earlier – were sold by Juventus in order to balance the books and bring in young Danish attacking midfielder Michael Laudrup.

40 years ago

One of Belgium's greatest-ever players, Paul Van Himst, caused a shock when he moved from Anderlecht – where he had won eight league championships and three cups since making his debut as a 16-year-old in 1959 – to RWD Molenbeek.

50 years ago

Newly promoted Northampton Town, who were in the English top flight for the first time, beat West Ham United 2-1 to win their first game at the 14th attempt. They had risen from the fourth to the first division in five seasons – but would be back there within five years.

WORDS: Nick Bidwell

EUROPE'S MOST WANTED MAN

He may be enjoying a sabbatical from the game, but former Borussia Dortmund boss Jurgen Klopp is still linked with every major coaching position

Over the next few months, no figure in the German game is going to be busier than Marc Kosicke – the agent, PR and business advisor, and confidante of Jurgen Klopp, the most wanted coach on the European circuit today.

While his superstar client takes a fully deserved sabbatical after 14 seasons on the technical area treadmill with Mainz and Borussia Dortmund, former Nike executive Kosicke is beavering away in the background on the next phase of Klopp's stellar career.

Since sensationally quitting Dortmund last spring, Klopp's name has been linked at one time or another with more or less every leading side. And wherever the 48-year-old Stuttgarter ends up, that club will be in for the ride of its life: an ▸

adrenaline-fuelled journey of breakneck attacking football, youthful dash and daring, plus holy communion of team and fan base.

During his seven-year tenure in Dortmund, Klopp went much further than sporting success (two Bundesliga titles, a German Cup and 2013 Champions League Final runners-up). He excited, he enthused, he challenged; and by the end of the process, he had changed the Yellow-and-Blacks forever.

The term "project" has become something of a tired corporate-football cliche, but for Klopp it really does have substance. It means empire-building with a human touch, and a large dash of local community identification.

After Dortmund's brush with bankruptcy in the early part of the new millennium, and several seasons of stagnation on the pitch, the charismatic Klopp was just the man to breath new life into their moribund operation. And this ability to freshen the stale is just what his latest

Decisions... Klopp has much to ponder

slew of suitors crave.

"At the beginning of my working relationship with Jurgen, I naturally didn't know how it would develop with him," Kosicke said in an interview with *Die Welt* newspaper this summer. "I simply found him to be exceptional in his human qualities and energy.

"I'm often amazed by how much drive he has. It's inspiring to see his comprehensive vision of a team. His first instinct is to see players as people."

Klopp's evolution into one of the world's best coaches was no accident. Brought up by his father, Norbert, to aim high in a range of sports, he had an early taste of the pursuit of excellence. Even as a teenager he was thinking ahead, going out of his way to join TuS Ergenzingen, the club reputed to have the best youth system in the Black Forest region.

While playing for Eintracht Frankfurt's reserves, the 21-year-old Klopp would spend much of his spare time coaching the club's schoolboys. Throughout his 11-year career as a forward or full-back at second division Mainz he was a figure of considerable influence – dressing-room voice of reason, line of communication between squad and management and intelligent reader of the game.

Senior pro Klopp and Mainz coach Wolfgang Frank were both admirers of the dynamic, all-conquering Milan side which Arrigo Sacchi assembled in the late 1980s and would endlessly talk shop. It's no

Mainz...Klopp (left)

FACT FILE

JURGEN NORBERT KLOPP

AGE
48 (16.06.67)

PLACE OF BIRTH
Stuttgart, Germany

PLAYING CAREER
Mainz (1990–2001)

COACHING CAREER
Mainz (2001–2008)
Borussia Dortmund (2008–2015)

HONOURS
Borussia Dortmund
Bundesliga: 2011, 2012
German Cup: 2012
German Super Cup: 2013, 2014

Sporting...Klopp congratulates Pepe Guardiola after losing the 2014 German Cup Final to Bayern

Farewell...his final game in charge of Mainz before leaving for Dortmund

coincidence that so many elements of the Sacchi/Frank bible – the flat back four, zonal marking, an aggressive high-pressing game, lightning-quick transitions and long training-ground routines without the ball – remain key tenets of the Klopp credo.

Mainz's appointment of Klopp in February 2001 was one of the first examples of a German club handing the first-team reins to one of its players. It might have seemed a panicky move for a club deep in relegation trouble and one that had consumed five coaches in the previous 12 months. But using Frank's methods as his guide and adding his way

with words to the mix, he managed to save the day, going on to steer the club to the Bundesliga three years later.

"He's just a natural talent," says Mainz general manager Christian Heidel.

So on which club's peg will Klopp hang his baseball cap next? Inevitably, he and Kosicke are playing their cards close to their chests, with the only concrete indicators being the clubs he definitely will not join.

In the wake of Lucien Favre's departure from Borussia Monchengladbach (see page 77), Kosicke moved swiftly to rubbish the rumours that Klopp was in the running

Emotional...celebrating a Dortmund win over Werder Bremen

for the job. And it was the same response in August when Marseille attempted to get him in as a replacement for Marcelo Bielsa.

On the face of it, OM might have been a snug fit, sharing plenty of common ground with the Dortmund that he took over in 2008 – a former Champions League winner in distress, a club with bags of tradition, the army of passionate fans.

Marseille president Vincent Labrune would have made him the king of the castle and tended to his every whim. Yet Klopp still was happy to just carry on recharging his batteries.

"Jurgen is in great shape at the moment," Kosicke told *Die Welt*. "He'd been working non-stop for a long time and finally has the chance to look back, reflect, analyse and do things he didn't have time for because of his Bundesliga and Champions League commitments. He's enjoying having the time to be a private person.

"Previously he'd go and visit his mother for two or three hours. Now he can stay with her for two or three days. He's leading an unspectacular life and is thankful for the privilege.

"Physically and mentally, he's getting ready for a new challenge. He's continuing to educate himself."

Although Klopp clearly is spoilt for choice, many German pundits subscribe to the theory that he will not even jump the border. Instead, next summer, he could take over from Pep Guardiola at Bayern Munich.

With Guardiola's contract due to expire at the end of this season, and the Catalan maestro showing little sign of opening extension talks, a major vacancy could well be in the offing at the Allianz Arena. Even Dortmund's CEO, Hans-Joachim Watzke, a good friend of Klopp, has been predicting such an outcome.

"Jurgen Klopp is a candidate for every top club," Watzke declared in the *Rheinischen Post* this summer. "Klopp and Bayern would work 100 per cent. He couldn't go wrong there."

> "It's inspiring to see his comprehensive vision of a team. His first instinct is to see players as people"
>
> **Klopp's agent and confidante, Marc Kosicke**

Some argue that Klopp's strong identification with Dortmund will make it almost impossible for him to be accepted at arch-rivals Bayern. But it's not an insurmountable hurdle. Ottmar Hitzfeld enjoyed untold success in Bavaria after making the same switch in 1998 and, as is well known, Klopp can be quite a charmer.

He certainly did not seem to have an anti-Bayern agenda when asked in May if he had ever thought about assuming control there. "Yes, of course," he replied. "Why shouldn't I imagine it? I'm a football coach and want to work for a while yet."

Despite his popularity among Real Madrid fans – he was the number one choice of club members to succeed Carlo Ancelotti when the latter was forced out at the end of last season – a move to the Bernabeu might be a risky business. Whereas his modus operandi is to patiently construct a winning team and develop his players step by step, Real president Florentino Perez speaks only in the present tense. He may not be given sufficient time.

The reality at Real is that the vision belongs to Perez and rather than building

KLOPP'S CIRCLE OF INFLUENCE

STAFF

PETER KRAWIETZ
Assistant
Klopp never misses a chance to praise the contribution of his long-time assistants, Zeljko Buvac and Peter Krawietz. "The three of us together make a really good Bundesliga coach," he told German magazine *11 Freunde* in 2011. "None of us would go anywhere without one of the others. Krawietz's speciality is video analysis – and whether used at half-time or in the Monday morning debriefs, his visual breakdowns have become a vital weapon in the Klopp armoury.

ZELJKO BUVAC
Assistant
In charge of training sessions and very astute tactically, the Bosnian-born Buvac has been in tandem with Klopp for almost two-and-a-half decades, playing in the same Mainz line-up and serving as his trusty right-hand man at Mainz and Dortmund. Indeed, during Klopp's early days on the Mainz bridge, Buvac was officially in charge, possessing the coaching qualifications that his friend lacked at the time.

INFLUENCES

ARRIGO SACCHI
Italian coach
In the 1980s, Sacchi revolutionised Italian and European football with a Milan side that rejected *catenaccio* defending, instead adopting zonal marking and aggressive pressing to unsettle opponents.

WOLFGANG FRANK
Former Mainz coach
His mentor at Mainz when Klopp was a senior pro at the second-division side. A great thinker and innovator, Frank was the first coach to bring Sacchi's tactical revolution to Germany and shared many ideas with Klopp. He died from a brain tumour, aged 62, in 2013.

MARC KOSICKE
Agent
The former Nike marketing director runs an agency that specialises in advising coaches and club directors, rather than players. He has been Klopp's advisor since his days at Mainz. Other clients include German national-team manager Oliver Bierhoff and Hanover coach Michael Frontzeck.

to his own design, Klopp merely would be the sub-contractor. Not his style. Not the way he sees his profession.

Unable to speak Spanish beyond ordering a beer, Klopp effectively would be juggling with one hand in La Liga. His communication and motivational skills are one of his greatest strengths and without that direct means of expression, he probably would struggle.

Should he go abroad, the smart money has to be on an assignment in England. He has long admired the Premier League's atmosphere, intensity and folklore. He has a command of the language and, in common with most supporters in the UK, he likes his football to be played at a rapid rate of knots, famously insisting that every aspect of Dortmund's play be conducted at blistering pace.

> "Young players expect a coach to live with them, talk to them, be creative. Jurgen does that very well"
> **Former Mainz boss Wolfgang Frank**

Liverpool...the Kop and Klopp would be a good fit

To coin a phrase: his football would be coming home.

"The Premier League is very exciting for him," Kosicke told German sports website *Spox*. "We're not only thinking about the top four. There are other big clubs below. It's more interesting for him to go to a stadium, experience the energy and feel he can make a difference than strive for the biggest goals."

Those quotes were interpreted in the English media as a reference to Liverpool, who finished sixth in the Premier League last season and have not won the domestic championship for 25 years. While it is anything but a done deal, Klopp undeniably does have the sort of "man-of-the-people" vibe that former manager Bill Shankly so memorably exploited during his legendary days at Anfield.

It's not prestige or financial rewards which puts the wind in Klopp's sails. He coaches for the buzz, the roar of the crowd and ultimately will make a gut decision. Much will depend on how he feels about the challenge, the locality, the chemistry with his employers.

Dortmund delight... celebrating a league and cup double with general manager Michael Zorc (left) and CEO Hans-Joachim Watzke in 2012

No wonder so many clubs have his agent's number on speed-dial. Loyal, psychologically brilliant and inventive, Klopp is the modern-day coach par excellence. Always hands on, always close to his players.

"A coach who keeps his distance from his squad has no chance," said ex-Mainz boss Frank, who first encouraged Klopp to take up a football leadership role.

"These days young players expect a coach to live with them, talk to them, be creative. Jurgen does that very well. He stands for permanent give and take. He combines discussion of the facts with emotion."

Frank died two years ago, but his thoughts are as relevant as ever. WS

Top of the league... lifting the 2012 Bundesliga shield

Managers index

After his departure from Borussia Dortmund at the end of last season, Jurgen Klopp still tops our latest rankings of football's most in-demand coaches

1 Jurgen KLOPP

Age: 47
Nationality: German
Current status: Unattached.
Past: Guided Mainz into the Bundesliga for the first time before leaving for Borussia Dortmund, who he steered to successive titles in 2011 and 2012, and the 2013 Champions League Final.
Style: Charismatic, bespectacled motivator.
Future: Could succeed Pep Guardiola at Bayern Munich next summer – as long as nobody else signs him up before them.

2 Diego SIMEONE

Age: 44
Nationality: Argentinian
Current status: Hugely successful with Atletico Madrid, winning La Liga and reaching the 2014 Champions League Final.
Past: Won league titles with Estudiantes and River Plate in Argentina, but less successful with San Lorenzo.
Style: Brilliant motivator and organiser.
Future: Has extended his Atletico contract until 2020 but that may not deter wealthy suitors.

3 Frank DE BOER

Age: 44
Nationality: Dutch
Current status: Led Ajax to a fourth Eredivisie title last term.
Past: Holland assistant at the 2010 World Cup.
Style: Committed to youth and the Ajax/Barcelona system of possession-based attack.
Future: Linked with Spurs in the past.

4 Carlo ANCELOTTI

Age: 55
Nationality: Italian
Current status: Unattached after leaving Real Madrid last summer.
Style: Player-friendly, owner-tolerant.
Future: In demand for a high-profile club seeking a big name to calm anxious players and fans.

5 Jorge SAMPAOLI

Age: 55
Nationality: Argentinian
Current status: Chile national coach.
Past: Led Chile to success at last summer's Copa America.
Style: Protege of Marcelo Bielsa and likes aggressive, attacking football.
Future: Keen to try his luck in Europe.

6 Luciano SPALLETTI

Age: 56
Nationality: Italian
Current status: Unattached.
Past: Took Udinese and Roma into the Champions League. Won two Russian league titles with Zenit.
Style: Ambitious, attacking outlook.
Future: A club needing a fresh tactical impetus.

7 Lucien FAVRE

Age: 57
Nationality: Swiss
Current status: Unattached after leaving Borussia Monchengladbach in September after a disappointing start to the new season.
Past: Transformed Gladbach into Champions League contenders. Previously with Hertha Berlin, Zurich and Servette.
Style: Tactically astute, likes to counter-attack at pace.
Future: Another Bundesliga "project" looks his most likely destination.

8 Marcelo BIELSA

Age: 60
Nationality: Argentinian
Current status: Unattached after an abrupt departure from Marseille after their opening game of the season in August.
Past: Has created attack-minded teams at Newell's Old Boys, Argentina, Chile and Athletic Bilbao.
Style: Eccentric, brilliant, unpredictable.
Future: Uncertain due to the nature of his exit from Marseille.

Key Experienced · Successful · Volatile · Former player · Young · Long-term strategist · Tactician · Available

9 Sam Allardyce *unattached, ex-West Ham*
10 Miguel Herrera *unattached, ex-Mexico*
11 Thomas Schaaf *unattached, ex-Eintracht*
12 Andre Villas-Boas *will leave Zenit at the season's end*
13 Michael Laudrup *unattached*
14 Cesare Prandelli *unattached*

15 Ernesto Valverde *Athletic Bilbao*
16 Jocelyn Gourvennec *Guingamp*
17 Roberto Donadoni *unattached, ex-Parma*
18 Vincenzo Montella *unattached*
19 Julen Lopetegui *Porto*
20 Elie Baup *unattached*
21 Bernd Schuster *unattached*
22 Eddie Howe *Bournemouth*
23 Mario Been *unattached*
24 Rene Girard *unattached*
25 Mirko Slomka *unattached*
26 Lluis Carreras *unattached*
27 Markus Weinzierl *Augsburg*
28 Christophe Galtier *Saint-Etienne*
29 Philippe Montanier *Rennes*
30 Antoine Kombouare *Lens*
31 Giuseppe Iachini *Palermo*
32 Ralph Hasenhuttl *Ingolstadt*
33 Erwin Van de Looi *Groningen*
34 Javi Gracia *Malaga*
35 Alexander Zorniger *Stuttgart*
36 Luis Zubeldia *LDU Quito*

37 Helder Cristovao *Benfica B*
38 Eric Gerets *unattached*
39 Alejandro Sabella *unattached*
40 Luigi Di Biagio *Italy U21*
41 Marco Landucci *assistant coach Juventus*
42 Martin Jol *unattached*
43 Frederic Antonetti *unattached*
44 Zinedine Zidane *Real Madrid B*
45 Dragan Stojkovic *Guangzhou R&F*
46 Felix Magath *unattached*
47 Jos Luhukay *unattached*
48 Frank Rijkaard *unattached*
49 Ryan Giggs *Man United assistant*
50 Remi Garde *unattached*

TOMORROW'S STARS TODAY

Talentscout

CENTRAL DEFENDERS

WORDS: Nick Bidwell

Jairo RIEDEWALD

Defender, 19 (09.09.96)
Ajax & Holland

In a sentence
A full international by the age of 18, the elegant, ball-playing centre-back has been compared to all-time Dutch great Frank Rijkaard and is widely expected to one day captain the "*Oranje*".

What they say
Frank De Boer, Ajax coach: "He has many attributes, both in defence and attack. I've told him: 'If you can wake up the monster in yourself, there's no stopping you.' And lately, he's been doing that. He now has to continue the good work and build up his experience. I've known for a long time that he's very talented." Marc Overmars, Ajax director of sport: "He's made important steps up the professional ladder. He's an extremely strong boy who can play good football as well. We've every confidence he will succeed at Ajax." Fred Grim, Holland under-21 coach: "He's not one to be deterred. He's no one-day wonder."

The story so far
The youngster from the Haarlem region of northern Holland is Ajax through and through. He won a place at the club's academy at 11 and leapt effortlessly through every formative hoop prior to making his first-team debut in December 2013. Three days later, he marked his first Eredivisie appearance by coming off the bench to score two late goals in a victory over Roda. A regular since the autumn of last year, he was initially deployed at left-back or in a midfield holding role, but following the departures of Niklas Moisander and Stefano Denswil this summer, he is now operating in his preferred central defensive slot. Earned his first Holland cap in a 3-0 loss to Turkey in September, playing at left-back.

> "I've told him, if you can wake up the monster in yourself, there's no stopping you"
> **Ajax coach Frank De Boer**

The next step
While Ajax are used to young prospects flying the nest at the first opportunity, they believe they can hold on to Riedewald for at least another two or three seasons, offering him guaranteed playing time and the best possible conditions to carry on learning the centre-back/organisational ropes. In May he extended his contract until the summer of 2019 and, encouragingly for the Amsterdam club, he talks about one day becoming a team leader.

Strengths
There is so much to admire in his game: the physical power, speed, agility, poise and composure, excellent distribution, classy ability to bring the ball out from the back. He has a good left foot and can play more or less anywhere.

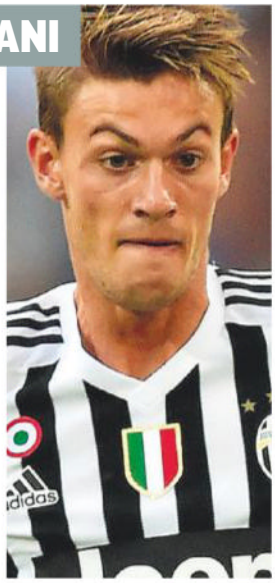
Weaknesses
He still has a way to go as an aerial force and, understandably for one so young, he can be somewhat impetuous in his decision-making.

3 THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT JAIRO

- His father is from Surinam and his mother is of Dutch-Indonesian descent.
- His opening goal against Roda in December 2013 made him the youngest player to score on their Eredivisie debut, at 17 years and 104 days.
- He made his first-team debut for Ajax only seven weeks after his first game for the reserve side, Jong Ajax.

Contract...Jairo Riedewald is tied to Ajax until 2019

Daniele RUGANI



Age 21 (29.07.94), Juventus & Italy

Having returned to Juve this summer after two excellent seasons on loan at Empoli, the Italy under-21 will have to make do for now with shadowing the likes of Leonardo Bonucci, Giorgio Chiellini and Andrea Barzagli. Yet he undoubtedly represents the future and was called up to Antonio Conte's senior *Azzurri* squad last year. Provided he remains patient, this young Tuscan should be home and dry. His efforts in Serie A last term were exemplary, playing every game for Empoli without a single yellow card.

Eric BAILLY

Age 21 (12.04.94), Villarreal (Spa) & Ivory Coast

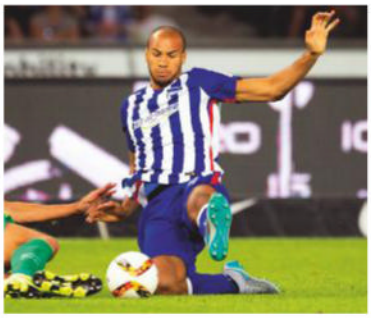
An ever-present as Ivory Coast triumphed in the 2015 African Nations Cup, the surprise new face in the Elephants' back-four came through his first big international test with flying colours. His bravery, speed and competitiveness did much to stabilise what many considered to be the team's weakest area. Having joined Villarreal from Espanyol in a €5.7m move earlier this year, he still has his rough edges – not least his occasionally wayward distribution and a tendency to misread high balls – but he remains a work in progress, a La Liga regular for barely 12 months.

Nikola MAKSIMOVIC

Age 23 (25.11.91), Torino (Ita) & Serbia

Sidelined after breaking a metatarsal in his left foot during a Serbia training session, the former Red Star Belgrade man's resilience is such that there's every chance he will be even more obdurate on his return. Frequently cited as the heir apparent to Serb man-marker extraordinaire Nemanja Vidic, such is his reputation that Napoli made an €18m offer for him in pre-season. Several Premier League sides have also been watching, impressed by his mix of blood-and-thunder nous and comfort on the ball.

John BROOKS



Age 22 (28.01.93), Hertha Berlin (Ger) & USA

This Berlin-born son of an American serviceman has been on Hertha's books for eight seasons. However, attempts to persuade him to sign a two-year contract extension have come to nought and his recent decision to change his agent is seen as a sign that he will move on.

Jannik VESTERGAARD

Age 23 (03.08.92), Werder Bremen (Ger) & Denmark

For the most part unloved and unwanted at Hoffenheim, the towering Dane has bounced back with a vengeance since joining northern German outfit Werder Bremen in January. Tough and combative, clever in his positional play, supreme in the air and not at all embarrassed on the ball, the Copenhagen native skippered Denmark's under-21 side at this summer's European Championship.

Jeison MURILLO

Age 23 (27.05.92), Internazionale (Ita) & Colombia

On the evidence of his strong performances for Colombia at this year's Copa America – particularly when scoring the winner against Brazil in the group phase – and gutsy displays this season at his new Italian club, the €8m recruit from Granada looks a fine investment by Inter.

MARLON

Age 20 (07.09.95), Fluminense & Brazil

Barcelona are said to have first option on Flu's cultured back-line stand-out and it's not hard to understand why. The Rio-born defender was in outstanding form as Brazil's Under-20s took silver at this year's World finals in New Zealand and impressed with his technical quality, coolness under pressure and ability to read the game. He is, however, relatively new to the role of centre-half, only switching there from a midfield slot a couple of years ago.

Antoine CONTE

Age 21 (29.01.94), Reims & France

The powerful French under-21 quit Paris Saint-Germain for Reims two years ago – initially on loan – and has reasserted himself at the Stade Auguste Delaune. Also capable of filling in at right-back, the Parisian has won caps in a string of age categories for France.

"I would have liked to be faster, to be able to burst away from players with a change of pace, like Andres [Iniesta]. I can't get away from anyone!"

Facetoface

XAVI

"I go home angry if I misplace passes...I'm not interested in winning at all costs"

The former Barcelona and Spain midfielder on his new life in Qatar and a possible future as a coach

How is life in Qatar?
Phenomenal. It's perfect. I have been pleasantly surprised. The technical and competitive level is remarkably high and the professionalism is good. It lacks a little on the tactical side and the organisational side is more relaxed, but, in general, it is extraordinary.

Your new team-mates must treat you with reverence...
I've felt a lot of respect, including from the coach, who is always looking out for me. But I want to be a regular member of the squad; having privileges does not appeal to me. Anyway, on the pitch, they are tough. Sometimes they go flying in; they see the ball and clean out two people in the way.

Does misplacing passes still bother you?
More than anything – besides losing, obviously. I go home angry if I misplace passes. I want to win practice matches, but by playing good football. I am not interested in winning at all costs.

If you become a coach, would you use the same style as Barcelona?
My philosophy is clear: be dominant, don't speculate, press high and close down the opposition's passing options. Obviously, Qatar is different to Barcelona. At La Masia you look for players for a 4-3-3 or a 3-3-4. In Qatar you have to use what's there. If there are two good forwards, you have to spread them around. The Spain national team has done that too. Iniesta is often played on the wings and Silva is not a forward, but they can play in these positions because they are top class.

Being a coach can be frustrating; achieving victory will not always depend on you..
Being a coach is difficult. You have to think for your 25 players, as a psychologist and as a motivator. That's the reason I'm preparing in Qatar. As a footballer, you turn up at training and then you play. As a coach, you have to plan a lot. But still it attracts me. I know they are going to demand a lot so I must prepare for it. Maybe I will serve more as sports director, I do not know yet.

Would you like to have had better long-range passing?
It's not something I'm known for but I do play a lot of long-range passes. One thing I would have liked is to be faster, to be able to burst away from players with a change of pace, like Andres [Iniesta]. I can't get away from anyone! I have to turn away or feint instead. That's meant I've always had to think more than others and read the game.

Is La Masia in crisis?
Never. La Masia cannot keep producing generations as we have in recent years. That was exceptional. Barca is a club that develops players, but always has to win trophies. In a year when they do not win anything, you have to sign a player from outside. But this year they won everything, so maybe it's time for Munir, Sandro or Samper.

What do you remember most from last year, when Barca turned things around after the defeat at Real Sociedad?
Luis Enrique was very humble. His reaction surprised me. He's a very emotional person and yet he did all the right things, reaching out to everyone, including Leo Messi. That's when it dawned on me that coaches are supporting actors and it's only the players who can get angry and have problems. Luis understood that, he talked to the players. Communication is fundamental.

It was Luis Enrique who persuaded you to stay last term – and you won the treble...
He was frank. He said he needed me in the dressing room, but at my age I was only going to play when I was needed. I came back from holiday and he convinced me even though I had already made my decision to leave. And look what happened then.

How do you rate the job that Luis Enrique has done?
Very good. He's a demanding man. When something fails you have to put a firecracker up people's backsides, it works. You have to be demanding in the dressing room.

Louis Van Gaal did that too, didn't he?
I will remember him all my life, but for better not worse. He was very direct. One day he would bury you and humiliate you in front of the group, and the next day he would tell me I was Zidane. That is the way he is and in time it has a positive effect. Under him I went from playing at Old Trafford to going to play at [third division] Alcoyano when he dropped me back down to Barca B. That is something that has been lost. Now if you are in the first team it's taken for granted that you will not go back down [to the reserves]. That's wrong. A kid of 18 has to play. That way, when you get back in the first team, you are hungrier than ever.

What one thing stands out most for you from all your years in the game?
All the silverware I've won and the privilege of playing, for example, in a Champions League Final. I've won a lot, given a lot and I respect the game. It isn't only the titles I've won, but how I won them.

What was it like before the game changed in favour of smaller players?
They were hard times. Getting through toughened you up. Others might have given up but I have quite a strong character. I'm a huge fan of Barca and Spain's playing style.

Interview by Oscar Campillo & Juan Castro/ESM

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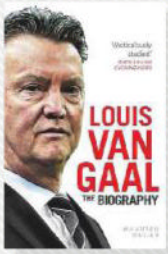

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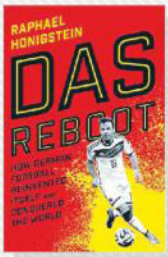

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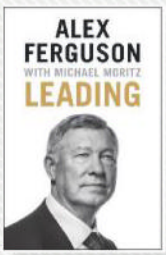

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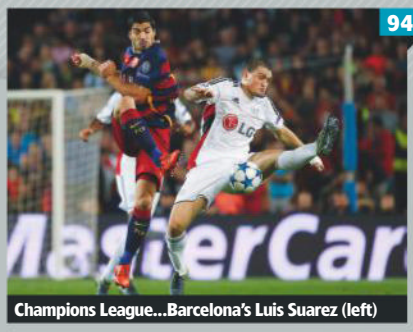


94 Champions League...Barcelona's Luis Suarez (left)

SEPTEMBER 3-SEPTEMBER 28, 2015

Global diary

A comprehensive record of recent events around the world

Thursday September 3

HOLLAND: Danny Blind's first game as national coach ends in defeat as Iceland win 1-0 in Amsterdam. A second-half Gylfi Sigurdsson penalty gives the visitors all three points in the Euro qualifier as the hosts' Bruno Martins Indi is sent off in the first half.
QATAR: A 15-0 win against Bhutan in the World Cup qualifiers is the biggest victory in Qatar's history, beating their previous best of 6-0 against India in 1998.
SOUTH KOREA: Son Heung-min, who joined Tottenham Hotspur from Bayer Leverkusen for £22m six days earlier, scores a hat-trick in his country's 8-0 World Cup qualifying win against Laos.

Friday September 4

FRANCE: Lyon striker Nabil Fekir is ruled out for six months after rupturing a cruciate ligament in his right knee during the 1-0 friendly win against Portugal. Manchester United's Anthony Martial makes his debut for *Les Bleus* as Mathieu Valbuena's free-kick stretches the home side's barren run to 40 years without a win over the French.
GERMANY: Goals from Mario Gotze (two) and Thomas Muller give Germany a 3-1 win over Poland in the Euro qualifiers and gain revenge for October's 2-0 defeat in Warsaw.
SAMOA: A 3-0 victory over hosts Tonga puts Samoa in the second round of the Oceania World Cup qualifiers as they finish top of the four-team tournament on goal difference, ahead of Cook Islands and American Samoa.

Saturday September 5

ENGLAND: A 6-0 win away to San Marino sees England become the first team to qualify for the finals of Euro 2016.
GERMANY: A crowd of 81,359 – thought to be a testimonial record – turn up at Borussia Dortmund's Westfalenstadion to bid farewell to the club's former left-back Dede.
LUXEMBOURG: Jonathan Joubert saves a penalty and debutant Sebastien Thrill scores in injury time as Luxembourg beat Macedonia 1-0.
SOUTH SUDAN: A 1-0 victory over Equatorial Guinea in the African Nations Cup qualifiers gives South Sudan a first-ever competitive win.
SWITZERLAND: Trailing 2-0 with 10 minutes to play in Basle, Switzerland hit back to win 3-2 against visitors Slovenia with goals from subs Josip Drmic (two) and Valentin Stocker.

Sunday September 6

ALL-AFRICA GAMES: The men's football tournament in Congo gets underway with a goalless draw between Ghana and Senegal.
ARGENTINA: San Lorenzo win 1-0 at Boca Juniors to leapfrog their hosts at the top of the table.
CZECH REPUBLIC: Holland's 3-0 loss in Turkey, coupled with a 2-1 win against Latvia puts the Czech Republic in next summer's Euro finals.
GHANA: Ashanti Gold win the league championship for the first time since their hat-trick of titles between 1993 and 1996 with a 1-0 victory over WAFA in the penultimate game of the season.
ICELAND: A goalless draw at home to Kazakhstan in the Euro qualifiers puts Iceland in the finals of a major tournament for the first time.
ITALY: Kicked out of the professional league after being declared bankrupt, Parma begin life in the fourth tier with a 1-0 win away to Arzignano.
USA: Former Ivory Coast and Chelsea striker Didier Drogba, 37, scores a hat-trick on his first MLS start for Montreal Impact as they beat Chicago Fire 4-2.

Monday September 7

GERMANY: Thomas Muller opens the scoring in a 3-2 victory away to Scotland that means Germany are unbeaten in the last 71 competitive internationals in which they have scored first.
POLAND: Cracovia's 18-year-old midfielder Bartosz Kapustka comes on as a sub for his international debut and scores Poland's eighth goal in their 8-1 thrashing of Gibraltar. Two goals for Robert Lewandowski make him top scorer in the Euro qualifiers so far with 10.

Tuesday September 8

AUSTRIA: A 4-1 win in Sweden sees Austria qualify for the European Championship finals for the first time. Their only previous appearance was

Stopped...Memphis Dempay of Holland is thwarted by Iceland's Gylfi Sigurdasson (right) and Birkir Saevarsson

Historic...Austria celebrate against Sweden

as co-hosts in 2008.

ENGLAND: Wayne Rooney becomes England's all-time top scorer – and the first to find the net in seven consecutive post-war competitive games – with his 50th international goal in a 2-0 win against Switzerland.

LUXEMBOURG: After a request for their game to be postponed is turned down, despite 16 squad members going down with food poisoning, Luxembourg lose 2-0 to Belarus.

MALAYSIA: The World Cup qualifier against Saudi Arabia in Selangor is abandoned, with the visitors winning 2-1, after flares are thrown on the pitch in protest at the record 10-0 defeat by the UAE the previous week.

SAN MARINO: Matteo Vitaioli notches San Marino's first goal on foreign soil for 14 years in a 2-1 defeat by Lithuania.

Wednesday September 9

CROATIA: National coach Niko Kovac is sacked after Sunday's 2-0 defeat by Norway, which left ➤

Tasty...Belarus (in white) and Luxembourg

Germany

NICK BIDWELL

Gone...Favre had four and a half years as boss of Gladbach

Favre quits Gladbach

Poor start to the season sees long-serving coach walk out

After losing their opening five games in the Bundesliga, and suffering a 3-0 Champions League reverse at Sevilla, Borussia Monchengladbach lapsed into further disarray when their long-serving coach, Lucien Favre, surprisingly resigned.

Having transformed Gladbach from a relegation-threatened rabble to top-drawer European participants, the former Swiss international had the total backing of the club board to ride out any storm. But with echoes of Jurgen Klopp's departure from Borussia Dortmund in the summer, the 57-year-old ultimately came to the conclusion that he was not part of the solution.

"I no longer have the feeling that I'm the perfect coach for Borussia Monchengladbach," said Favre. "In this situation, the best decision is to vacate my post. I had to take this decision for Borussia's future. At this time, it's the best course for the club and the team to have a change."

Dubbed a tactical and organisational genius, Favre was third in the Bundesliga coach of the year poll. But with everyone expecting him to carry on the good work this season, it all turned sour.

> "I no longer have the feeling that I'm the perfect coach for Borussia Monchengladbach"
> Lucien Favre's resignation statement

The situation was not helped by the loss of striker Max Kruse and defensive midfielder Christoph Kramer, and the inability of newcomers Josip Drmic, Lars Stindl and Andreas Christensen to fill those gaps. Then there has been the absence through injury of centre-backs Martin Stranzl and Alvaro Dominguez, full-back Fabian Johnson and attacking midfielder Patrick Herrmann.

With confidence in the camp taking an immediate hit, tactical indiscipline and marked dips in individual form became the norm. And desperate to right the listing ship, Favre overdosed on experimentation – constantly tinkering with shape and strategy, and forever reshuffling his personnel. He spent the opening few weeks of this season frantically rolling the dice and hoping for the best. A revamped back-four every week; four different main strikers; new signing Stindl always having his role re-defined; and Tony Jantschke shuttling between right-back, central defence and midfield ball-winner duties.

It may take a while for Gladbach fans to come to terms with Favre's exit as he not only revitalised the team after more than a decade of underachievement, but he also made them attractive to watch, especially when hitting on the break with lightning speed.

"We had hoped that we could convince him to remain with us," declared club president Rolf Konigs. "However, once he had gone public with his resignation, there was no going back."

Some have been quick to question his decision to tamely throw in the towel, with ex-national coach Berti Vogts saying Favre "should have carried on fighting", while former Bayern Munich and Wolfsburg boss Felix Magath argued that he had acted discourteously, leaving the club in a difficult situation.

But there was support from Wolfsburg CEO, Klaus Allofs, who said: "I don't think for a moment that this was a knee-jerk reaction.

"For every club, apart from Bayern, it's really difficult to repeat the good results of the year before. Maybe he just looked at it and saw it wasn't working." WS

INDIA

JOHN DUERDEN

ISL overshadows traditional league

But merger looks on the cards one day

On December 20 last year, almost 37,000 fans turned out in Mumbai – a neutral venue – to watch Atletico de Kolkata beat Kerala Blasters 1-0 in the Final of the inaugural Indian Super League (ISL). In the last minute of stoppage time, Mohammed Rafique headed home a corner past the despairing dive of David James in the most dramatic of endings.

With an average attendance of almost 24,000 and an ability to make headlines in the local media that the regular league, the I-League, simply can't compete with, the first ISL – backed by Indian conglomerate Reliance and the Indian FA's commercial partners IMG – was generally seen as a success.

Even the selling of the eight franchises was big news with famous investors from diverse worlds such as cricket, Bollywood, business and European football (Atletico Madrid, Fiorentina and Feyenoord) all getting involved. These owners then brought in famous – if seriously aging – overseas stars such as Robert Pires, Alessandro Del Piero, David Trezeguet, Freddie Ljungberg and Nicolas Anelka, and they were coached by international tacticians such as Zico, Peter Reid and Marco Materazzi.

All in all, this showed that, given the right conditions, Indians will turn out in significant numbers to watch football.

And the question of whether they will keep doing so once the novelty and a little of the glitz has worn off will be answered soon.

Ahead of the 2015 edition, which kicked off on October 3, several of the previous season's star names had returned, but there did seem to be fewer big names this time around. Anelka is still with Mumbai City, another Chelsea old boy, Adrian Mutu, has signed for Pune City, while John Arne Riise and Florent Malouda have joined Delhi Dynamoes. On the coaching side of things, David Platt is in charge of Pune, Peter Taylor has succeeded David James at Kerala, Anelka is now player-coach after taking over from Peter Reid in Mumbai, and Roberto Carlos is a player-coach in Delhi.

The bulk of the competition's players, however, come from the currently out-of-season I-League, and this is generally seen as a good thing as it increases the players' earnings and their exposure to well-known foreign coaches and opponents.

The bread-and-butter competition that started in 2007 lacks the glamour of the new arrival and has an average attendance of less than 5,000. It has 11 teams and is based mostly in the relative football-loving hotspots of Kolkata, Goa and the north-east of the country, as well as Mumbai and Pune.

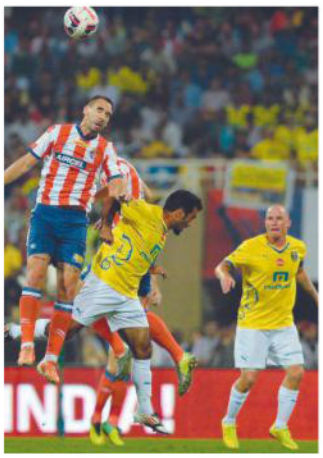
Famous...Bollywood actor Hrithik Roshan (below, centre) co-owns Pune City

> "We will have only one league in the next two to three years, but how to merge these two together is being planned out"
>
> All India Football Federation general secretary, Kushal Das

Whether the Super League helps or harms the I-League is a matter for debate. The ISL has many advantages – not least money, exposure and better facilities – and some believe that the new tournament takes money and attention away from where it is needed most. But others argue that this is entirely new money and attention, and the longer it continues the more it will help to create a solid infrastructure in the country from which all will benefit.

On the negative side, there are rumours that I-League clubs Pune FC and Bharat may not participate when the new season kicks off at the end of the ISL campaign. And such worries have added impetus to a new and major development: the discussion over increasingly when, and not if, the two competitions will be merged.

"We will have only one league in the next two to three years, but how to merge these two together is being



Winners...Atletico de Kolkata (in red) beat Kerala Blasters 1-0 in last season's Final

Acting investor...Mumbai City's Ranbir Kapoor meets his team

planned out," said All India Football Federation general secretary Kushal Das in August. "It has been a long time that there's been no change in football here, it needs a shake up. We have a roadmap and even all stakeholders have the same view of having just one league."

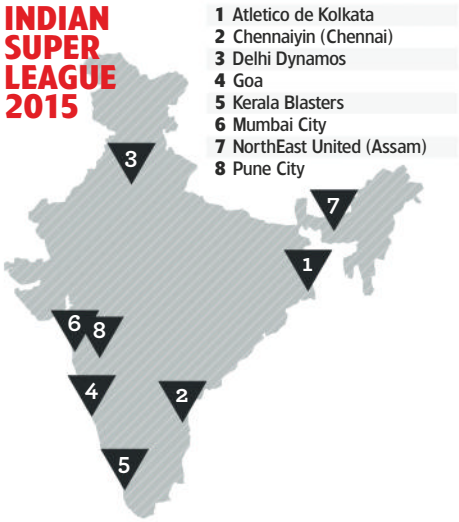
Supporters of the merger hope that combining the glitz, glamour and money of the ISL with the more solid football foundation that the I-League provides is the way forward for Indian football. But not all agree. The country's best-ever player, Bhaichung Bhutia, believes that the I-league must improve on the pitch and upgrade the facilities off it before there can be any merger.

Talk of patience may fall on deaf ears especially if the next I-League season is a tough one.

There are plenty of issues to discuss – especially if, as many believe, the ISL with its bigger brand power basically absorbs its older and bigger brother. What will be done about promotion and relegation, which takes place in the I-League but not the ISL? And will there be a place for historic Indian club sides such as Mohun Bagan, who recently celebrated their 125th birthday, and Kolkata rivals East Bengal.

For most, the pressing issue for organisers of the ISL is how to ensure an avoidance of the second-season syndrome. What comes after remains to be seen. WS

INDIAN SUPER LEAGUE 2015



ATLETICO DE KOLKATA
Salt Lake Stadium (68,000)
Coach: Antonio Lopez
Squad includes: Josemi, Helder Postiga.

CHENNAIYIN
Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium (40,000)
Coach: Marco Materazzi
Squad includes: Elano, Bernard Mendy.

DELHI DYNAMOS
Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium (60,000)
Player-coach: Roberto Carlos,
Squad includes: John Arne Riise, Florent Malouda.

GOA
Fatorda Stadium (19,800)
Coach: Zico
Squad includes: Lucio, Leo Moura.

KERALA BLASTERS
Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium (60,000)
Coach: Peter Taylor
Squad includes: Carlos Marchena, Peter Ramage.

MUMBAI CITY
DY Patil Stadium (55,000)
Player-coach: Nicolas Anelka
Squad includes: Darren O'Dea.

NORTHEAST UNITED
Indira Gandhi Athletic Stadium (35,000)
Coach: Cesar Farias
Squad includes: Simao Sabrosa, Boubacar Sanogo.

PUNE CITY
Balewadi Sports Complex (18,000)
Coach: David Platt
Squad includes: Adrian Mutu, Didier Zokora, Tuncay Sanli, Kalu Uche.

KEY DATES

Regular season started October 3, 2015
Regular season ends December 6, 2015
Final December 20, 2015

➤ Croatia's chances of qualifying automatically for the Euro 2016 finals in the balance.
USA: Vancouver Whitecaps regain top spot in the Western Conference with a 2-0 win over Colorado Rapids.

Thursday September 10

GABON: France's Under-20 World Cup-winner Mario Lemina, who is currently on loan at Juventus from Marseille, pledges his international allegiance to Gabon. The 22-year-old midfielder rejected a call-up from his homeland in January.
RUSSIA: Dynamo Moscow are banned from signing any new players until they clear all debts related to unpaid transfer fees.

Friday September 11

DJIBOUTI: Guelleh Batal beat AS Port 2-0 in the Djibouti Cup Final.
ENGLAND: Spanish goalkeeper David De Gea, who saw a move to Real Madrid collapse on transfer deadline day, signs a new four-year deal with Manchester United.
FRANCE: Paris Saint-Germain are denied a record-equalling 14th consecutive victory in Ligue 1 as they are held to a 2-2 draw by Bordeaux – who set the record in 2009.
PANAMA: Arabe Unido beat Alianza 2-0 to set a new national record of going unbeaten in their opening nine games of a league campaign.

Saturday September 12

CHINA: Brazilian trio Robinho, Ricardo Goulart and Elkeson all score as Guangzhou Evergrande beat Shanghai SIPG 3-0 and take their place at the top of the table.
ENGLAND: A 3-1 defeat at Everton sees Chelsea make their worst start to a top-flight season in 29 years. Manchester City make it five wins out of five with a 1-0 victory at Crystal Palace. Anthony Martial scores on his debut as Manchester United beat Liverpool 3-1.
GERMANY: Thomas Muller's last-minute penalty maintains Bayern Munich's 100 per cent start in the Bundesliga as they beat Augsburg 2-1. Borussia Dortmund stay top on goal difference after winning 4-2 away to Hanover.
ITALY: A late penalty from Paulo Dybala gives Juventus their first point of the season in Serie A as they draw 1-1 at home to Chievo.
RUSSIA: Defending champions Zenit come from two goals down to end CSKA Moscow's perfect start to the season with a 2-2 draw.
SCOTLAND: Ten-man Aberdeen come from behind to beat Celtic 2-1 and leapfrog the reigning champions at ➤

➤ the top of the Premiership.
SERBIA: Red Star beat city rivals Partizan 3-1 in the Belgrade derby to cement their place as league leaders.
SPAIN: Cristiano Ronaldo gets five goals in Real Madrid's 6-0 win at Espanyol to become the club's record league scorer with 230 goals. Lionel Messi nets his first of the season as Barcelona win 2-1 at Atletico Madrid.

Sunday September 13

ARGENTINA: Nicolas Lodeiro's first-half strike gives Boca Juniors a 1-0 win at home to rivals River Plate and lifts his side to the top of the league.
ENGLAND: Two down with less than 20 minutes to go, Leicester City beat Aston Villa 3-2 to go second. Tottenham Hotspur win for the first time this season, with a 1-0 victory over Sunderland, who go bottom.
FAROE ISLANDS: B36 Torshavn win back-to-back titles for the first time in their history as a 2-1 victory over seventh-placed TB Tvoroyri establishes an unassailable 10-point lead with three games to go.
FRANCE: Rennes make their best start to a campaign since the 1950-51 season, with a 2-0 victory over Brittany rivals Nantes putting them one point behind Ligue 1 leaders Paris Saint-Germain.
GERMANY: Klaas-Jan Huntelaar misses his fourth successive penalty for Schalke before partly making amends and scoring later in a 2-1 win against Mainz.
ITALY: Internazionale go top of Serie A for the first time in three years as Fredy Guarin scores the winner against Milan, for whom Mario Balotelli makes his second debut.
MEXICO: Fernando Uribe scores four times as Toluca come from 3-1 down to win 4-3 at Pachuca.
QATAR: Former Barcelona and Spain midfielder Xavi makes his Qatar Stars League debut as Al Sadd beat newly promoted Mesaimeer 4-0 in their opening game of the season.
SPAIN: Despite having goalkeeper Javi Varas sent off and playing with 10 men for 80 minutes, Las Palmas draw 3-3 at Celta Vigo.

Monday September 14

ENGLAND: Newcastle United lose 2-0 at West Ham United and replace north-east rivals Sunderland at the bottom of the Premier League.
ITALY: Sampdoria beat Bologna 2-0, in a game that was rearranged after heavy rain at the weekend, to go second in Serie A.
ROMANIA: Dinamo Bucharest have three players sent off as they lose 2-0 at home to CFR Cluj and surrender the league's last unbeaten record this season.
SPAIN: Real Madrid are no longer the world's most valuable sports teams after being knocked off the top in Forbes' annual survey by NFL franchise Dallas Cowboys, who are valued at $4billion as opposed to Real's $3.26bn.

Tuesday September 15

AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE: Former champions Al Hilal of Saudi Arabia and China's Guangzhou Evergrande go through to the semi-finals with victories over Qatar's Lekhwiya and Kashiwa Reysol of Japan respectively.
ENGLAND: On a bad night in the Champions League for Manchester, City and United both lose 2-1, to Juventus and PSV respectively. United left-back Luke Shaw suffers a double fracture of his left leg.
FRANCE: Angel Di Maria gets his first goal since signing for Paris Saint-Germain in a 2-0 win against Malmo.
GERMANY: Six years after beating CSKA Moscow at the start of their only previous Champions League campaign, Wolfsburg begin this term with a 1-0 win against the Russians.
KAZAKHSTAN: Astana make the Champions League's longest-ever journey – only to lose 2-0 at Benfica.
SCOTLAND: Aberdeen beat Hamilton Academical 1-0 to make it seven wins out of seven league games and stretch their lead at the top of the table to five points.
SPAIN: Cristiano Ronaldo scores a hat-trick – the third of his career in the Champions League – as Real Madrid beat Shakhtar Donetsk 4-0, while Antoine Griezmann gets both goals in Atletico Madrid's 2-0 win at Galatasaray. Kevin Gameiro scores one penalty, misses another and wins a third for Ever Banega to convert in Sevilla's 3-0 victory over Borussia Monchengladbach.
USA: DC United become the first team to reach the knockout stage of the CONCACAF Champions League with a 2-0 win against Arabe Unido.

Wednesday September 16

AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE: Al Ahli of the UAE beat tournament debutants Naft Tehran of Iran 3-1 on aggregate to reach the last four for the first time, where they are joined by Japan's Gamba Osaka, who beat Jeonbuk Motors of South Korea.
BELGIUM: Gent goalkeeper Matz Sels saves a late Alexandre Lacazette penalty as the Champions League debutants – who have Brecht Dejaegere and Thomas Foket sent off – draw 1-1 at home to Lyon.
CROATIA: Dinamo Zagreb win their first Champions League group ➤

France

HOWARD JOHNSON

Chaos reigns in Marseille

Losing start saw coach quit after one game

If trophies were handed out for footballing comedy, then Marseille would be the unquestionable champions of Europe. When they haven't been strenuously denying allegations of Mafioso connections at OM, and endless machinations regarding the club's finances (or lack of them), there's been a revolving-door policy of departing coaches and top players to contend with.

And this latest season began no differently when, out of the blue, Argentinian boss Marcelo Bielsa decided to resign after the opening game of the campaign, an insipid 1-0 home defeat to Caen. He had been in charge for just 15 months.

Marseille being Marseille, and Bielsa being "*El Loco*", it all had to unravel in the most unseemly manner. Bielsa had his French interpreter read out to a gobsmacked press room the resignation letter he'd passed to president Vincent Labrune just minutes before, blaming behind-the-scenes political manoeuvring and moving of the goal posts in contract renegotiations as the reasons for his sudden departure. You couldn't make it up.

Paris Saint-Germain were once equally as daft and dozy, but all that Qatari money and business savvy managed to turn the capital outfit into one very serious operation. Marseille, meanwhile, continue to make

Pressure...Michel is the new man in charge at Marseille

Effort...Remy Cabella in action against Bastia

headlines for all the wrong reasons.

Yet a quick glance at Marseille's set-up would surely baffle anyone as to why this huge club, extremely well supported and probably more popular in France than even PSG, appears so chaotic and ineffective.

OM are controlled by Margarita Louis-Dreyfus, whose net worth as the widow of hugely successful businessman and former owner Robert Louis-Dreyfus is estimated at $9.6billion. So what's the problem, we hear you say? Surely cash like that should see Marseille battling it out with Europe's elite easily enough?

Well, basically, no. Louis-Dreyfus has most of her wealth tied up in trust funds and isn't allowed to cash out. With her personal fortune estimated at around the €300million mark, it's suddenly clear that Marseille don't actually have the kind of cash on tap that's needed to mount a serious challenge.

Margarita and Robert have three sons, all of whom inherited huge sums of money following their father's death in 2009. Each will formally become a part owner of the holding company that owns Marseille when they reach the age of 25. So there is at least hope that one day there might be serious money on the table in the south of France. Yet there are still problems. Eldest boy Eric is already 23, but he has stated that he's not interested in the football club, leaving the way open for 17-year-old twins Kyril and Marcel.

Eight years is clearly a long time in football, though, so what can Marseille's long-suffering supporters expect in the meantime? In the short term, the club has moved quickly to replace Bielsa by bringing in former Spain international Michel. The 52-year-old's last job was in Greece as coach of Olympiakos, who let him go last January, despite winning the Greek league twice and the Greek cup once.

> "I cannot accept this situation of instability. I've given everything that I have to this team. I have finished my work here"
>
> Marcelo Bielsa's resignation statement

It took just 10 days to bring the Spaniard on board, despite talk that former Italy international Roberto Donadoni was also in the running. And the club's faith was instantly repaid as OM romped to a 6-0 home drubbing of Troyes in front of an ecstatic Stade Velodrome. Given that the team had lost both of their opening games, the big win came as a welcome surprise.

After five matches, however, Marseille still found themselves sitting in a lowly 11th place in the Ligue 1 table, seven points behind leaders PSG. It's not where the club's fanatical fans want to see them.

Virtually all of last year's key players – including Dimitri Payet, Andre-Pierre Gignac, Florian Thauvin, Gianna Imbula and Andre Ayew – have moved on to pastures new. Replacements have arrived, including Mauricio Isla, Remy Cabella and Karim Rekik, but it's fair to say that these aren't names that have got the Marseille faithful jumping up and down.

Time will tell whether Michel will be able to produce the goods while dealing with the financial restrictions that are clearly so much a part of OM's day-to-day life. Bielsa took the team to a creditable fourth place last season, but frankly he had better players to work with. Michel will do well to match his predecessor's performance.

One thing we know for certain, though. There's never a dull moment at OM – so don't expect it to be all plain sailing for the new man at the helm. WS

game for 16 years, with a 2-1 victory over Arsenal.

KENYA: Gor Mahia win the league title for a third consecutive season and collect a record 15th title in total – putting them one ahead of AFC Leopards – with a 1-0 victory over Sony Sugar.

PORTUGAL: Porto goalkeeper Iker Casillas equals Xavi's record of 151 Champions League games as his side draw 2-2 with Dynamo Kiev thanks to two goals from Vincent Aboubakar in the Ukraine.

SPAIN: Lionel Messi makes his 100th Champions League appearance, in Barcelona's 1-1 draw at Roma. Valencia fight back from 2-0 down before eventually losing 3-2 as Zenit record their first-ever win in Spain.

USA: Frank Lampard scores his first MLS goal as New York City beat Toronto 2-0.

Thursday September 17

EUROPA LEAGUE: Jose Callejon scores the first goal of the group stage to put Napoli on their way to a 5-0 rout of Club Brugge. Last season's runners-up Dnipro grab a late equaliser to draw 1-1 with Lazio, while Lokomotiv Moscow win 3-1 to inflict a first-ever home defeat in the competition on Sporting Lisbon.

GERMANY: Having twice set attendance records for Europa League qualifying games this season, Borussia Dortmund set a group-stage best as 55,200 watch them win 2-1 against Krasnodar of Russia.

MEXICO: Emanuel Villa becomes the first player to score five goals in a CONCACAF Champions League game as Queretaro beat Verdes of Belize 8-0.

QATAR: Former Barcelona captain Xavi scores his first goal for Al Sadd in a 2-2 draw with Umm Salal.

ROMANIA: UEFA order Romania to play their Euro 2016 qualifier at home to Finland on October 8 behind closed doors following racist and violent behaviour from fans at games against Hungary and Greece.

Friday September 18

ALL-AFRICA GAMES: Moussa Seydi scores after 84 seconds as Senegal beat Burkina Faso 1-0 in the Final.

Saturday September 19

CROATIA: Angelo Henriquez misses a late penalty for visiting Dinamo Zagreb after Hajduk Split have Julian Velazquez sent off in a goalless Eternal Derby.

ENGLAND: West Ham United end Manchester City's perfect start to the Premier League season with a 2-1 win at the Etihad, while Chelsea ➤

El Salvador

BRYAN KAY

Maradiaga takes on a tainted team

Fresh start for new generation

When Albert Roca parted company with El Salvador, the national coach delivered a parting shot that seemed a somewhat self-serving critique following a largely indifferent 14-month reign.

However, the curious words of his interim replacement, Jorge Rodriguez, uttered in the aftermath of a tricky but successfully negotiated World Cup qualifying tie against Caribbean contender Curacao, lent some weight to the Spaniard's accusations.

In the aftermath of the two-legged qualifier, Rodriguez and at least one player – defender Alexander Larin – referred to a lack of material support for the national team. In echoes of Roca's gripes, he lamented the players' poor facilities and inadequate accommodation when they gather for matches.

The game in the Central American country is in the doldrums and has been for decades. From the grassroots up, training pitches are in a sorry state, the national league operates at a low level and player development is considered poor – all areas identified as problematic by Roca.

But the elephant in the room was the relative youth of his squad. With an average age of 25 at last summer's Gold Cup, the El Salvadorians bowed out in the group stage after draws with Canada and Costa Rica, and a narrow 1-0 defeat by Jamaica. Yet the events that landed Roca with such a young team were anything but organic; rather, the result of a match-rigging scandal that rocked El Salvadorian football in 2013. Some 14 players were given life bans for fixing national-team matches, including a 5-0 defeat by Mexico in the Gold Cup in 2011. Another eight were suspended for between six months and five years.

Couple those circumstances with a football-loving nation and media that all too easily recalls a time when El Salvador qualified for the World Cup – their last of

Still standing... El Salvador celebrate a goal against Curacao in a World Cup qualifier

New staff...El Salvador coach Ramon Maradiaga (left) and his assistant Gilberto Yearwood

their two appearances was at Spain 1982 – and Roca may well have inherited an impossible task. On closer inspection, results during his tenure were not disastrous. Besides the close nature of their Gold Cup matches, Roca led his side to a credible fourth-placed finish at last year's Centroamericana Cup, ahead of regional heavyweight and neighbour Honduras.

Rodriguez seemed certain to take over from Roca on a full-time basis before talks with the Salvadorian Football Federation faltered. It's unclear whether the man they call "Zarco" declined to assume control over a lack of guarantees on the type of conditions the players could expect in future. Officials said Rodriguez was their "plan A". Now he will remain in charge of El Salvadorian top league club Isidro Metapan, where he has shone since taking the reins in 2013.

The federation turned instead to Honduran coach Ramon Maradiaga, a former boss of the national team of both his homeland and that of Guatemala. Picked up from Honduran league minnows Vida, the 60-year-old has had a peripatetic managerial career – though he can claim a much longer track record in coaching than Rodriguez, who remains in his first job.

So these are interesting times for football in El Salvador. This era can be regarded as post-scandal, inhabited by a new generation devoid of nearly an entire squad summarily castigated for rigging. They

> **"The national team became a metaphor for the country"**
> Cristian Villalta, chief editor of *El Grafico*, the sports magazine that exposed the scandal

won't be under the more illustrious tutelage of one-time Barcelona assistant Roca, who tendered his resignation after bowing out of the Gold Cup. But perhaps his influence and critique can steer El Salvador toward a more productive – and salubrious – future.

Poverty and corruption plague a nation only a couple of decades removed from a brutal civil war. It is countries like El Salvador where illegal betting, orchestrated by the kind of mobsters who brought down the bulk of the national squad, finds its most fertile ground. Low wages mean the bounties offered can prove a strong temptation. Steps have been taken to educate the next generation, but the threat lingers.

Maradiaga is in charge for the duration of El Salvador's qualification campaign for Russia 2018, the next stage of which sees them in a group that kicks off in November and includes Mexico, Honduras and Canada. It looks a formidable task ahead for the young Salvadorians and perhaps the 2022 incarnation will be a slightly more realistic proposition. WS

➤ win 2-0 at home to 10-man Arsenal, who have Gabriel and Santi Cazorla sent off.
GERMANY: A 1-0 victory at Werder Bremen sees Ingolstadt become the first team to win their first three away games in a debut season in the German top flight.
HOLLAND: Heracles beat PSV in the league for the first time in 51 years, coming from behind to win 2-1.

Sunday September 20

FRANCE: The day after violent scenes at Bastia-Nice and Reims-Paris Saint-Germain, Marseille's 1-1 draw at home to Lyon is suspended for 23 minutes after fans throw missiles on the pitch.
ITALY: Francesco Totti scores his 300th goal for Roma in a 2-2 draw with Sassuolo, while Juventus claim their first Serie A win of the season, beating Genoa 2-0.
PORTUGAL: Porto sit three points clear at the top of the table as a goal from midfielder Andre Andre gives them a 1-0 win over Benfica.
RUSSIA: League leaders CSKA Moscow battle back from 3-0 down in the first 15 minutes to beat Mordovia Saransk 6-4.
SPAIN: Lionel Messi misses from the penalty spot for a second time this season but still scores twice as Barcelona beat Levante 4-1.

Monday September 21

EGYPT: Zamalek beat Al Ahly for the first time in eight years, winning 2-0 in the Egyptian Cup Final to complete the domestic double.
KUWAIT: Al Kuwait beat Al Qadsia 3-1 in the Kuwaiti Super Cup.

Tuesday September 22

ALGERIA: USM Alger midfielder Youcef Belaili, who has won two caps for Algeria, is banned for two years for failing a drugs test after his club's African Champions League game against MC El Eulma last month.
ENGLAND: Chelsea striker Diego Costa is banned for three games for a charge of violent misconduct in Saturday's 2-0 win over Arsenal – whose defender Gabriel has an appeal against his red card upheld.
GERMANY: Robert Lewandowski comes on as a second-half sub and scores five goals in the space of nine minutes as Bayern Munich come from behind to beat Wolfsburg 5-1.
SPAIN: Atletico Madrid go top of La Liga with a 2-0 win over Getafe.

Wednesday September 23

ENGLAND: Arsenal win 2-1 at north London rivals Tottenham Hotspur in the League Cup, while Liverpool ➤

Italy

PADDY AGNEW

Fiorentina take shock early lead

La Viola top Serie A for the first time since 1999

When Paulo Sousa's Fiorentina won summer friendlies against Barcelona and Chelsea, most people took those results with the extra-large pinch of salt applicable to pre-season games. While victories such as those might set fans dreaming, it is reasonable to suggest that it will be a different story when the real action begins.

However, six games into the Serie A season and Fiorentina fans were in wonderland as a stunning 4-1 destruction job of unbeaten Internazionale at the San Siro put *La Viola* top of the table for the first time since February 1999.

Back then, the fate of Fiorentina rested on the shoulders of two legends of the post-war Italian game: coach Giovanni Trapattoni and Argentinian striker Gabriel Batistuta. Prior to that, the last time the club from Florence actually won the title was 46 years ago, in the 1968-69 season.

> "You can take nothing for granted in our league...anything can happen"
> Fiorentina's team director Daniele Prade

So, is it realistic to list Fiorentina among this season's championship contenders? Are they not rather the classic "belle of the ball", one of those top-level teams that often play good football, often win important matches, but never lift a title, at home or abroad?

On the morning after their unexpected win at Inter, team director Daniele Prade was keeping his feet on the ground, telling state radio RAI: "You can take nothing for granted in our league...anything can happen and we will take it game by game...and we will see how we go. It's simply too soon to be deciding who is going to win the title."

Owned since 2002 by leather goods tycoon Diego Della Valle, Fiorentina have been parked in the thin-oxygen zone of Serie A for much of the past decade, having finished fourth five times in the last seven seasons. In that same period they have been regularly competitive in Europe, losing a 2008 UEFA Cup semi-final to Rangers and last year's Europa League semi-final to Sevilla. Although that is a decent record, it is hardly the sort of stuff to make Real Madrid, Bayern Munich, Manchester United et al quake in their boots. And it would also be mistaken to read too much into the San Siro result, given that it was one of those games where everything that could go wrong for the league leaders, Inter, did indeed go wrong.

Animated...Fiorentina's Paulo Sousa

For a start, their normally reliable Slovene goalkeeper Samir Handanovic made a total mess of a simple defensive back pass in only the third minute, bringing down Fiorentina's former Blackburn Rovers and Dnipro striker Nikola Kalinic to concede a penalty which Josip Ilicic slotted home.

In a panic to get themselves back into the game, Inter were twice caught out by Fiorentina counter-attacks, conceding two further goals to Croatian front man Kalinic, in the 18th and 23rd minutes. Eight minutes later, the Inter nightmare got worse when Brazilian defender

Helpless...goalkeeper Samir Handanovic looks on as Fiorentina's hat-trick hero Nikola Kalinic helps end Internazionale's unbeaten league start

Miranda, again caught out by a Fiorentina counter-attack, pulled down the imposing Kalinic, who only had Handanovic to beat. It was a clear red-card offence and Inter were three goals down and a man short with an hour still to be played.

From then on, it was academic stuff as Fiorentina played an extended training-ground session, interrupted only by an Inter goal from Mauro Icardi and the third of the night from Kalinic.

On paper, Fiorentina have a less imposing squad than Juventus, Roma, Napoli and Inter. In practice, players such as Facundo Roncaglia and Davide Astori in defence, a midfield of Jakub Blaszczykowski, Borja Valero and Ilicic, not to mention Kalinic in attack, form a more than useful unit. Could it be, though, that Fiorentina's best purchase of the summer was Portuguese coach Sousa, formerly of Basle?

Dejection...Juve's Paulo Dybala (left) and Simone Zaza after the 2-1 defeat by Napoli

Defeat brought an end to Inter's five-match winning start to the domestic campaign, though perhaps too much was read into victories against Atalanta, Carpi, Milan, Chievo and Verona.

As for Juventus – outplayed by Napoli in a 2-1 away defeat the day before Fiorentina's victory over Inter – they appear to have serious problems, while Napoli, galvanised by Gonzalo Higuain and Lorenzo Insigne, are beginning to look like the real thing.

And what about Sassuolo? After six games, they were the only unbeaten team left in Serie A.

As Prade says, you can take nothing for granted. WS

➤ need penalties to get past fourth-tier Carlisle United.

FRANCE: Saint-Etienne make it five wins on the trot, beating Troyes 1-0 to move within a point of leaders Paris Saint-Germain. Nice come from behind to thrash Bordeaux 6-1.

GERMANY: Borussia Dortmund's 11-game winning run comes to an end with a 1-1 draw at Hoffenheim. Borussia Monchengladbach climb off the bottom of the table with their first win after five straight defeats, beating Augsburg 4-2.

ITALY: Internazionale equal their club record of five successive wins at the start of a Serie A campaign as they beat Verona 1-0, while Juventus are held 1-1 at home by Frosinone, who pick up their first-ever point in Serie A.

MACEDONIA: Last season's league champions Vardar win the Super Cup, beating Rabotnicki on penalties.

SPAIN: Barcelona drop points in La Liga for the first time this season, going down 4-1 at Celta Vigo. They are replaced at the top of the table by Real Madrid, who win 2-1 away to Athletic Bilbao. Sevilla remain bottom after losing 2-0 to Las Palmas.

Thursday September 24

ARMENIA: Pyunik beat Mika 3-0 in the Super Cup.

FRANCE: Montpellier surrender a two-goal lead and lose 3-2 at home to Monaco and remain bottom of Ligue 1.

Friday September 25

FRANCE: David N'Gog is on target as Reims beat Lille 1-0 to go fourth.

Saturday September 26

ENGLAND: Manchester United beat Sunderland 3-0 and go top of the table, overtaking Manchester City who lose 4-1 at Tottenham Hotspur. Alexis Sanchez scores a hat-trick as Arsenal win 5-2 at Leicester City to end the Premier League's last unbeaten record.

FINLAND: Mariehamn beat Inter Turku 2-1 to win the Finnish Cup and secure a place in next season's Europa League.

ICELAND: FH beat Fjolnir 2-1 to seal their seventh championship title with one game still to play.

MEXICO: Guadalajara win 2-1 away to Club America in *El Super Clasico*.

RUSSIA: League leaders CSKA Moscow maintain their unbeaten record with a 1-1 draw against city rivals Lokomotiv.

SCOTLAND: After eight consecutive league wins, Aberdeen lose 2-1 at Inverness Caledonian Thistle.

SPAIN: Leo Baptistao, who is on ➤

➤ loan from Atletico Madrid, scores the winning goal as Villarreal beat his parent club 1-0 to go top of La Liga. Lionel Messi is ruled out for eight weeks after suffering a knee injury in Barcelona's 2-1 victory over Las Palmas.

SUDAN: Al Merreikh beat TP Mazembe of Congo DR 2-1 in their home leg of the CAF Champions League semi-final.

WALES: The showdown between the only two unbeaten teams in the top flight finishes goalless as The New Saints stay ahead of second-place Bala Town on goal difference.

Sunday September 27

ALGERIA: USM Alger come from behind to win 2-1 away to Al Hilal of Sudan in their CAF Champions League semi-final.

FRANCE: Marseille's dismal start to the season continues with a 2-1 defeat at home to Angers.

GERMANY: Borussia Dortmund lose further ground in the title race as they are held to a 2-2 draw at home by Darmstadt, but Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang sets a Bundesliga record by scoring in Dortmund's first seven league games this term.

ITALY: Nikola Kalinic grabs a hat-trick as Fiorentina win 4-1 away to end Internazionale's 100 per cent start to the season and overtake them at the top of Serie A.

SPAIN: Real Sociedad fail to score for the fourth time in six La Liga games as they were held 0-0 in the Basque derby by Athletic Bilbao.

TUNISIA: Etoile Sahel beat Zamalek of Egypt 5-1 in the first leg of the CAF Confederation Cup semi-final.

Monday September 28

ITALY: Federico Dionisi scores twice as Frosinone beat Empoli 2-0 to win in the top flight for the first time in their 103-year history. Juventus defender Martin Caceres is fined and suspended from first-team activities after crashing his Ferrari in Turin. WS

Historic...Frosinone's Federico Dionisi

Out but not down

Coach remains upbeat despite obstacles in his way

Up against it... Laos (in white) were hammered by South Korea

September's 8-0 savaging in South Korea, followed by a 2-0 loss at home to Kuwait, may have ended dreams of reaching the 2018 World Cup finals, but Laos coach Steve Darby says October's game against Myanmar is still "our cup final".

The game will be played in the Thai capital of Bangkok, as Myanmar were sanctioned for crowd violence in the 2014 qualifiers, and Darby says: "If we win this we should get fourth place [in the qualifying group] and climb the FIFA rankings."

Darby took charge after the first round of qualifiers and is under no illusion as to the task he has taken on. "The aim at first is to get respectable scores, which keep players and fans motivated," he admits. "It's naive to go out and attack Japan or Korea as you will more than likely get battered and that destroys morale.

"You have to maximise your strengths and sometimes park the bus – though at times we need a double decker against Korea and Lebanon!

"But by playing these top nations the players will improve. And it's a test for a coach as well."

A former goalkeeper from Liverpool, Darby never made the grade in England but played professionally in Australia and the USA before coaching across Asia. But even though the 60-year-old may be an Asian veteran, even he was surprised by what he found in Laos.

"In many ways, it is still recovering from the Vietnam War," he explains. "Unexploded bombs make some areas off limits even today, but the footballers are highly enthusiastic and hard working."

Laos staged this year's Asian Football Federation Under-19 Championship and finished third – the country's best international performance to date – but the national side is handicapped by government rules that insist any eligible overseas player must relinquish all other passports before representing Laos.

> "Unexploded bombs make some areas off limits even today, but the footballers are highly enthusiastic and hard working"
>
> Laos coach Steve Darby

Billy Ketkeophomphone is a 25-year-old striker in Ligue 1 with Angers, but he can't play for Laos without giving up his French passport.

"I would love to have Billy in the set-up," sighs Darby. "There are many players out there – in the USA, Australia and France due to the Vietnam War.

"We get frequent requests from players who would not get in the French national team but would love to play in the World Cup. It's frustrating having such a small talent pool when there are players out there.

"Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia all allow heritage players. The federation is trying hard to resolve this problem.

"Eventually it has to happen as all other south east Asian nations are reaping the benefits." WS

Internationals

2018 WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS

ASIA section

● *4.5 finals places available*

1st round

(for the 12 lowest-ranked countries)
1st legs - Mar12; 2nd legs - Mar17/23, 2015
Cambodia v Macau 3-0, 1-1 (agg 4-1)
East Timor v Mongolia 4-1, 1-0 (agg 5-1)
India v Nepal 2-0, 0-0 (agg 2-0)
Sri Lanka v Bhutan 0-1, 1-2 (agg 1-3)
Taiwan v Brunei 0-1, 2-0 (agg 2-1)
Yemen v Pakistan 3-1, 0-0 (agg 3-1)

2nd round

(the remaining 34 countries entered at this stage; ties to be completed by Mar 2016)

Group A

Sep 3 - Jeddah
Saudi Arabia 7 (Al Shehri 2, Al Sahlawi pen 23, 26, 71, Al Faraj 30, Al Jassam 32, Al Muwallad 73)
East Timor 0
HT: 5-0. **Ref:** Faizullin (Kyr)

Sep 3 - Abu Dhabi
United Arab Emirates 10 (Salem 16, Ali 22, 33, 76, Al Fardan 25, Khalil 24, 29, 70, 78, M Ahmed 37)
Malaysia 0
HT: 7-0. **Ref:** Al Jassim (Qat)

Sep 8 - Shah Alam
Malaysia v Saudi Arabia
Match abandoned in the 87th minute after fans threw fireworks and flares onto the pitch; Saudi Arabia were leading 2-1

Sep 8 - Al Ram
Palestine 0
United Arab Emirates 0
Ref: Al Qaysi (Irq)

2018 WC QUALS – ASIA – 2ND ROUND: GP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
UAE	3	2	1	0	11	0	7
Saudi Arabia	2	2	0	0	10	2	6
Palestine	3	1	1	1	8	3	4
East Timor	3	0	1	2	1	9	1
Malaysia	3	0	1	2	1	17	1

Previous results (all 2015)

Jun 11	Malaysia v East Timor	1-1
	Saudi Arabia v Palestine	3-2
Jun 15	East Timor v UAE	0-1
	Malaysia v Palestine	0-6

Group B

Sep 3 - Perth
Australia 5 (Leckie 6, Rogic 8, 20, Burns 29, Mooy 61)
Bangladesh 0
HT: 4-0. **Ref:** Vo (Vie)
Australia: Federici - Spiranovic, Elrich, Davidson, Wright, Milligan (Irvine 76), Mooy, Luongo, Rogic (Cahill 62), Burns, Leckie (Ikonomidis 62).

Sep 3 - Amman
Jordan 0
Kyrgyzstan 0
Ref: Bin Yaacob (Mly)

Sep 8 - Dhaka
Bangladesh 0
Jordan 4 (Abdallah Deeb pen 13, 56, Abu Amarah 33, Bakheet 58)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Yu (Tai)

Sep 8 - Dushanbe
Tajikistan 0
Australia 3 (Milligan 57, Cahill 73, 90+1)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Abdulhusin (Bhn)
Australia: Federici - Spiranovic, McGowan, Davidson, Wright, Milligan, McKay (Rogic 68), Mooy (Burns 68), Luongo, Cahill, Leckie (Oar 78).

2018 WC QUALS – ASIA – 2ND ROUND: GP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Australia	3	3	0	0	10	1	9
Jordan	3	2	1	0	7	1	7
Kyrgyzstan	3	1	1	1	4	3	4
Tajikistan	3	0	1	2	2	7	1
Bangladesh	4	0	1	3	2	13	1

Previous results (all 2015)

Jun 11	Bangladesh v Kyrgyzstan	1-3
	Tajikistan v Jordan	1-3
Jun 16	Bangladesh v Tajikistan	1-1
	Kyrgyzstan v Australia	1-2

Group C

Sep 3 - Shenzhen
China 0
Hong Kong 0
Ref: Delovski (Aus)

Sep 3 - Doha
Qatar 15 (Musa 8, 28, Kasola 18, Assadalla 21, 45, 63, Al Haidos 25, 87, Muntari 38, 41, 48, Afif 57, Khoukhi 62, 70, I Mohammad 75)
Bhutan 0
HT: 8-0. **Ref:** Abu Loum (Jor)

Sep 8 - Hong Kong
Hong Kong 2 (Bai He 87, Karikari 89)
Qatar 3 (Boudiaf 22, Hassan 62, Musa 84)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Kim Sang-woo (SKo)

Sep 8 - Shenyang, China[1]
Maldives 0
China 3 (Yu Dabao 8, 57, Zhang Linpeng 66)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Singh (Sin)
[1] *Game played in China because of poor pitch conditions in the Maldives*

2018 WC QUALS – ASIA – 2ND ROUND: GP C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Qatar	3	3	0	0	19	2	9
China	3	2	1	0	9	0	7
Hong Kong	4	2	1	1	11	3	7
Maldives	3	0	0	3	0	6	0
Bhutan	3	0	0	3	0	28	0

Previous results (all 2015)

Jun 11	Hong Kong v Bhutan	7-0
	Maldives v Qatar	0-1
Jun 16	Bhutan v China	0-6
	Hong Kong v Maldives	2-0

Group D

Sep 3 - Tehran
Iran 6 (Dejagah pen 10, Taremi 32, 65, Azmoun 34, 41, Torabi 90)
Guam 0
HT: 4-0. **Ref:** Al Marri (Qat)
Iran: Beiranvand - Ghafouri (Rezaeian 64), Montazeri, Hosseini, Amiri, O Ebrahimi, Teymourian, Dejagah (Alishah 75), Hajsafi, Taremi, Azmoun (Torabi 70).

Sep 3 - Seeb
Oman 3 (Saleh 7, Saparov og 12, Al Hosni 58)
Turkmenistan 1 (Amanov 82)
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Bin Jahari (Sin)

Sep 8 - Harmon
Guam 0
Oman 0
Ref: Kimura (Jap)

Sep 8 - Bangalore
India 0
Iran 3 (Azmoun 28, Teymourian 46, Taremi 49)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Al Jeneibi (UAE)
Iran: A Haghighi - Montazeri, Hosseini, Amiri, Teymourian, Dejagah, O Ebrahimi (Pouraliganji 62), Heydari (K Rezaei 75), Hajsafi, Taremi (Ezatolahi 62), Azmoun.

2018 WC QUALS – ASIA – 2ND ROUND: GP D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Iran	3	2	1	0	10	1	7
Oman	3	2	1	0	5	2	7
Guam	4	2	1	1	3	7	7
Turkmenistan	3	0	1	2	2	5	1
India	3	0	0	3	2	7	0

Previous results (all 2015)

Jun 11	Guam v Turkmenistan	1-0
	India v Oman	1-2
Jun 16	Guam v India	2-1
	Turkmenistan v Iran	1-1

Group E

Sep 3 - Saitama
Japan 3 (Honda 28, Yoshida 50, Kagawa 61)
Cambodia 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Kim Hee-gon (SKo)
Japan: Nishikawa - Nagatomo, Morishige, Yoshida, H Sakai, Honda (Haraguchi 83), Kagawa, Yamaguchi, Hasebe, Okazaki (Koroki 78), Muto (Usami 65).

Sep 3 - Muscat, Oman
Syria 1 (Al Jafal 59)
Singapore 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Al Marzouq (Kuw)

Sep 8 - Tehran, Iran
Afghanistan 0
Japan 6 (Kagawa 10, 50, Morishige 35, Okazaki 57, 60, Honda 74)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Al Kuwari (Qat)
Japan: Nishikawa - Nagatomo, Morishige, Yoshida, H Sakai (Usami 70), Honda, Kagawa (Muto 76), Yamaguchi, Hasebe (Endo 80), Haraguchi, Okazaki.

Sep 8 - Phnom Penh
Cambodia 0
Syria 6 (Khribin 29, 39, Malki 31, Al Mawas 44, O Midani 50, Omari 82)
HT: 0-4. **Ref:** Wang (Chn)

2018 WC QUALS – ASIA – 2ND ROUND: GP E

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Syria	3	3	0	0	13	0	9
Japan	3	2	1	0	9	0	7
Singapore	3	1	1	1	4	1	4
Afghanistan	3	1	0	2	1	12	3
Cambodia	4	0	0	4	0	14	0

Previous results (all 2015)

Jun 11	Afghanistan v Syria	0-6
	Cambodia v Singapore	0-4
Jun 16	Cambodia v Afghanistan	0-1
	Japan v Singapore	0-0

Group F

Sep 3 - Tehran, Iran
Iraq 5 (Adnan 37, Hisni 59, Yasin 80, Mahmoud 88, Meram pen 90+1)
Taiwan 1 (Wen Chih-hao 86)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Abdul Baki (Oma)

Sep 8 - Taipei
Taiwan 1 (Wu Chun-ching 84)
Vietnam 2 (Dinh Tien Thanh 53, Tran Phi Son 90+2)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Kim Dae-young (SKo)

Sep 8 - Bangkok
Thailand 2 (Theerathon pen 80, Mongkol 83)
Iraq 2 (Meram 35, Mahmoud 49)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Toma (Jap)

2018 WC QUALS – ASIA – 2ND ROUND: GP F

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Thailand	3	2	1	0	5	2	7
Iraq	2	1	1	0	7	3	4
Vietnam	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Taiwan	3	0	0	3	2	9	0

Indonesia excluded after being suspended by FIFA for government interference in the national FA

Previous results (both 2015)

May 24	Thailand v Vietnam	1-0
Jun 16	Taiwan v Thailand	0-2

Group G

Sep 3 - Doha, Qatar
Kuwait 9 (Nasser 11, 18, Maqseed 12, Zaid 47, Zaw Min Tun og 57, Mashaan 62, Al Mutawa pen 69, 88, 90+3)
Myanmar 0
HT: 3-0. **Ref:** Asimov (Uzb)
Sent off: Aung Zaw (Myanmar) 68

Sep 3 - Hwaseong
South Korea 8 (Lee Chung-yong 9, Son Heung-min 12, 74, 89, Kwon Chang-hoon 30, 75, Suk Hyun-jun 57, Lee Jae-sung 90+2)
Laos 0
HT: 3-0. **Ref:** Iida (Jap)
South Korea: Kwoun Sun-tae - Hong Jeong-ho, Kim Young-gwon, Hong Chul (Kim Jin-su 69), Jang Hyun-soo, Ki Sung-yueng, Lee Chung-yong (Lee Jae-sung 77), Kwon Chang-hoon, Jung Woo-young, Son Heung-min, Suk Hyun-jun (Hwang Ui-jo 62).

Sep 8 - Vientiane
Laos 0
Kuwait 2 (Nasser 31, Al Mutawa pen 84)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Pu-Udom (Tha)

Sep 8 - Beirut
Lebanon 0
South Korea 3 (Jang Hyun-soo pen 22, Hamam og 26, Kwon Chang-hoon 60)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Mashentsev (Kyr)
South Korea: Kim Seung-gyu - Kim Jin-su, Kim Young-gwon, Kwak Tae-hwi, Jang Hyun-soo (Rim Chang-woo 79), Jung Woo-young, Koo Ja-cheol (Lee Jae-sung 46), Kwon Chang-hoon, Ki Sung-yueng, Lee Chung-yong, Suk Hyun-jun (Hwang Ui-jo 76).

2018 WC QUALS – ASIA – 2ND ROUND: GP G

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
South Korea	3	3	0	0	13	0	9
Kuwait	3	3	0	0	12	0	9
Lebanon	3	1	0	2	2	4	3
Myanmar	3	0	1	2	2	13	1
Laos	4	0	1	3	2	14	1

Previous results (all 2015)

Jun 11	Laos v Myanmar	2-2
	Lebanon v Kuwait	0-1
Jun 16	Laos v Lebanon	0-2
	Myanmar v South Korea	0-2

Group H

Sep 3 - Riffa
Bahrain 0
North Korea 1 (Jong Il-gwan 42)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Torki (Irn)

Sep 3 - Tashkent
Uzbekistan 1 (Geynrikh 51)
Yemen 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Lee (SKo)
Sent off: Al Radaei (Yemen) 89

Sep 8 - Bocaue
Philippines 1 (Schrock 67)
Uzbekistan 5 (Ahmedov 1, Rashidov 14, 80, Sergeev 43, 65)
HT: 0-3. **Ref:** Green (Aus)

Sep 8 - Doha, Qatar
Yemen 0
Bahrain 4 (Baba pen 31, Al Husaini 47, Omar 66, Adnan 77)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Al Khudair (Sau)

2018 WC QUALS – ASIA – 2ND ROUND: GP H

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
North Korea	3	3	0	0	8	2	9
Uzbekistan	3	2	0	1	8	5	6
Philippines	3	2	0	1	5	6	6
Bahrain	3	1	0	2	5	3	3
Yemen	4	0	0	4	0	10	0

Previous results (all 2015)

Jun 11	Philippines v Bahrain	2-1
	Yemen v N Korea (awarded)	0-3
Jun 16	North Korea v Uzbekistan	4-2
	Yemen v Philippines	0-2

● *The 8 group winners and the 4 runners-up with the best record will qualify for the 3rd round*

3rd round

The 12 qualifiers will be drawn into 2 6-team groups (ties to be played Aug 2016-Sep 2017)
● *The top 2 in both groups will qualify for the finals; the 2 3rd-placed countries will meet in the Asia section play-off, the winner of which will meet the 4th-placed Concacaf country in a play-off for a place in the finals*

CONCACAF section

● *3.5 finals places available*

1st round

(for the 14 lowest-ranked countries)
1st legs - Mar 22-27; 2nd legs - Mar 26-31, 2015
Bahamas v Bermuda 0-5, 0-3 (agg 0-8)
Barbados v US Virgin Islands 0-1, 4-0 (agg 4-1)
Belize v Cayman Islands
0-0, 1-1 (agg 1-1, Belize on away goals)
British Virgin Islands v Dominica 2-3, 0-0 (agg 2-3)
Curacao v Montserrat 2-1, 2-2 (agg 4-3)
Nicaragua v Anguilla 5-0, 3-0 (agg 8-0)
St Kitts & Nevis v Turks & Caicos 6-2, 6-2 (agg 12-4)

2nd round
(the 13 next lowest-ranked countries entered at this stage)
1st legs - June 7-12; 2nd legs - June14-16, 2015
Antigua & Barbuda v St Lucia 1-3, 4-1 (agg 5-4)
Aruba v Barbados 0-2, 3-0 (awarded) (agg 3-2)
Curacao v Cuba
0-0, 1-1 (agg 1-1, Curacao on away goals)
Dominica v Canada 0-2, 0-4 (agg 0-6)
Dominican Republic v Belize 1-2, 0-3 (agg 1-5)
Guatemala v Bermuda 0-0, 1-0 (agg 1-0)
Nicaragua v Surinam 1-0, 3-1 (agg 4-1)
Puerto Rico v Grenada 1-0, 0-2 (agg 1-2)
St Kitts & Nevis v El Salvador 2-2, 1-4 (agg 3-6)
St Vincent & The Grenadines v Guyana
2-2, 4-4 (agg 6-6, St Vincent on away goals)

3rd round
(the 2 next lowest-ranked countries entered at this stage)

1st legs
Sep 4 - St John's
Antigua & Barbuda 1 (Weston pen 74)
Guatemala 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 7,005. **Ref:** Villarreal (USA)

Sep 4 - Toronto
Canada 3 (Ricketts 25, 65, Hutchinson 90)
Belize 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 10,412. **Ref:** Pitti (Pan)

Sep 4 - Willemstad
Curacao 0
El Salvador 1 (Larin 12)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Legister (Jam)

Sep 4 - St George's
Grenada 1 (Straker pen 33)
Haiti 3 (Maurice 27, Jerome 39, Nazon 55)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 5,100. **Ref:** Rodriguez (Hnd)

Sep 4 - Kingston
Jamaica 2 (Mattocks 69, Mariappa 78)
Nicaragua 3 (Rosas pen 4, Chavarria 7, Galeano 47)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 18,300. **Ref:** Mejia (ESv)

Sep 4 - Kingstown
St Vincent & The Grenadines 2 (Slater 50, Anderson pen 89)
Aruba 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 4,100. **Ref:** Harris (T&T)

2nd legs
Sep 8 - Oranjestad
Aruba 2 (Danso 4, 50)
St Vincent & The Grenadines 1 (Slater 84)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 950. **Ref:** Penaloza (Mex)
St Vincent & The Grenadines 3-2 on agg

Sep 8 - Belmopan
Belize 1 (McCaulay 26)
Canada 1 (Johnson 45)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 2,500. **Ref:** Santos (PR)
Canada 4-1 on agg

Sep 8 - San Salvador
El Salvador 1 (Barrios 8)
Curacao 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 27,884. **Ref:** Montero (CR)
El Salvador 2-0 on agg

Sep 8 - Guatemala City
Guatemala 2 (C Ruiz 63, D Lopez 75)
Antigua & Barbuda 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Garcia (Mex)
Guatemala 2-1 on agg

Sep 8 - Port-au-Prince
Haiti 3 (Guerrier 26, Nazon 37, Belfort 49)
Grenada 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 13,764. **Ref:** Gantar (Can)
Haiti 6-1 on agg

Sep 8 - Managua
Nicaragua 0
Jamaica 2 (Mattocks 12, Dawkins 89)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 18,000. **Ref:** Reyna (Gtm)
Sent off: Laing (Jamaica) 90
Jamaica 4-3 on agg

4th round draw
(the remaining 6 countries enter at this stage; ties to be played Nov 2015-Sep 2016)

Group A
Canada, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico

Group B
Costa Rica, Haiti, Jamaica, Panama

Group C
Guatemala, St Vincent & The Grenadines, Trinidad & Tobago, United States

● *The top 2 in each group will qualify for the 5th round*

5th round
The 6 qualifiers will form a single group (ties to be played Nov 2016-Oct 2017)
● *The top 3 will qualify for the finals; the 4th-placed country will meet the winner of the Asia section play-off in a play-off for a place in the finals*

OCEANIA section
● *0.5 finals places available*

1st round
(for the 4 lowest-ranked countries)
All played in Nuku'alofa, Tonga

Aug 31
Tonga 0
Cook Islands 3 (Saghabi 38, 52, 60)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Behari (Fij)

Aug 31
Samoa 3 (Faaiuaso 4, Hamilton-Pama 18, Mobberley 26)
American Samoa 2 (Beauchamp 38, 86)
HT: 3-1. **Att:** 200. **Ref:** Sogo (Sol)
Sent off: Toni (Samoa) 54

Sep 2
Cook Islands 1 (Saghabi 39)
Samoa 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 150. **Ref:** Banga (Van)

Sep 2
Tonga 1 (S Uhatahi 47)
American Samoa 2 (J Mana'o 49, R Ott 51)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 200. **Ref:** Chand (Fij)

Sep 4
Tonga 0
Samoa 3 (Mobberley 9, Hall 22, 77)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 250. **Ref:** Jacques (Tah)

Sep 4
American Samoa 2 (Mitchell 58, J Mana'o 67)
Cook Islands 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Behari (Fij)
Sent off: Samuelu (American Samoa) 80

2018 WC QUALS – OCEANIA – 1ST RND – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Samoa (Q)	3	2	0	1	6	3	6
Amer Samoa	3	2	0	1	6	4	6
Cook Islands	3	2	0	1	4	2	6
Tonga	3	0	0	3	1	8	0

● *Samoa qualified for the 2nd round*

2nd round draw
(the remaining 7 countries enter at this stage; ties to be played May 2016-June 2016)

Group A
New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tahiti

Group B
Fiji, New Zealand, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu

● *The top 3 in both groups will qualify for the 3rd round*

3rd round
The 6 qualifiers will be drawn into 2 3-team groups (ties to be played Mar 2017-Oct 2017)
● *The 2 group winners will qualify for the play-off round*

Play-off round
The 2 qualifiers will meet in a play-off (ties to be played in Oct 2017)
● *The play-off round winner will meet the 5th-placed South American country in a play-off for a place in the finals*

AFRICA section
● *5 finals places available*

1st round draw
(for the 26 lowest-ranked countries)
Central African Republic v Madagascar
Chad v Sierra Leone
Comoros v Lesotho
Djibouti v Swaziland
Eritrea v Botswana
Gambia v Namibia
Liberia v Guinea-Bissau
Mauritius v Kenya
Sao Tome e Principe v Ethiopia
Seychelles v Burundi
Somalia v Niger
South Sudan v Mauritania
Tanzania v Malawi
1st legs - Oct 7-10; 2nd legs – Oct11-13, 2015

2nd round draw
(the remaining 27 countries enter at this stage)
Angola v South Africa
Benin v Burkina Faso
Libya v Rwanda
Morocco v Equatorial Guinea
Mozambique v Gabon
Sudan v Zambia
Togo v Uganda
Central African Rep OR Madagascar v **Senegal**
Chad OR Sierra Leone v **Egypt**
Comoros OR Lesotho v **Ghana**
Djibouti OR Swaziland v **Nigeria**
Eritrea OR Botswana v **Mali**
Gambia OR Namibia v **Guinea**
Liberia OR Guinea-Bissau v **Ivory Coast**
Mauritius OR Kenya v **Cape Verde Islands**
Sao Tome e Principe OR Ethiopia v **Congo**
Seychelles OR Burundi v **DR Congo**
Somalia OR Niger v **Cameroon**
South Sudan OR Mauritania v **Tunisia**
Tanzania OR Malawi v **Algeria**
1st & 2nd legs - Nov 2015

3rd round
The 20 qualifiers will be drawn into 5 4-team groups (ties to be played Oct 2016-Nov 2017)
● *The 5 group winners will qualify for the finals*

EUROPE section
● *13 finals places available (excluding the place for hosts* **Russia**, *who qualify automatically)*

Draw
(ties to be played Sep 2016-Oct 2017)

Group A
Belarus, Bulgaria, France, Holland, Luxembourg, Sweden

Group B
Andorra, Faroe Islands, Hungary, Latvia, Portugal, Switzerland

Group C
Azerbaijan, Czech Republic, Germany, Northern Ireland, Norway, San Marino

Group D
Austria, Georgia, Moldova, Republic of Ireland, Serbia, Wales

Group E
Armenia, Denmark, Kazakhstan, Montenegro, Poland, Romania

Group F
England, Lithuania, Malta, Scotland, Slovakia, Slovenia

Group G
Albania, Israel, Italy, Liechtenstein, Macedonia, Spain

Group H
Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cyprus, Estonia, Greece

Group I
Croatia, Finland, Iceland, Turkey, Ukraine

● *The 9 group winners will qualify for the finals; the 8 runners-up with the best record will be paired in 4 play-offs, the winners of which will also qualify for the finals*

SOUTH AMERICA section
● *4.5 finals places available*

The 10 confederation members will form a single group (ties to be played Oct 2015-Oct 2017)

Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela

● *The top 4 will qualify for the finals; the 5th-placed country will meet the Oceania play-off round winner in a play-off for a place in the finals*

EURO 2016 QUALIFIERS

Group A
Sep 3 - Plzen
Czech Republic 2 (Skoda 74, 86)
Kazakhstan 1 (Logvinenko 21)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 10,572. **Ref:** Strombergsson (Swe)
Czech Republic: Cech - Kaderabek, Suchy, Prochazka, Limbersky, Pavelka, Darida (Sural 68), Dockal, Skalak (Skoda 46), Krejci (Kopic 84), Lafata.
Kazakhstan: Pokatilov - Gurman, Maliy, Logvinenko, Kuat, Islamkhan (Suyumbayev 78), Smakov, Shomko, Dzholchiyev, Nuserbayev (Khizhnichenko 72), Konysbayev (Kukeyev 88).

Sep 3 - Amsterdam
Holland 0
Iceland 1 (G Sigurdsson pen 51)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 50,275. **Ref:** Mazic (Ser)
Holland: Cillessen - Van der Wiel, De Vrij, Martins Indi, Blind, Wijnaldum (Promes 80), Klaassen, Sneijder, Robben (Narsingh 31), Huntelaar (Bruma 40), Depay.
Sent off: Martins Indi 33.
Iceland: Halldorsson - B Saevarsson, Arnason, R Sigurdsson, A Skulason, Bodvarsson (Finnbogason 78), G Sigurdsson, A Gunnarsson (O Skulason 86), B Bjarnason, J Gudmundsson, Sigthorsson (Gudjohnsen 64).

Sep 3 - Konya
Turkey 1 (Selcuk Inan 77)
Latvia 1 (Sabala 90+1)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 35,900. **Ref:** Johannesson (Swe)
Turkey: Volkan Babacan - Ozan, Serdar, Hakan Balta, Caner, Calhanoglu, Selcuk Inan, Arda, Gokhan Tore (Sener 58), Burak (Mehmet Topal 84), Volkan Sen (Umut 56).
Latvia: Vanins - Maksimenko, Dubra, Gabovs, Tarasovs, Laizans (E Visnakovs 82), A Visnakovs, Cauna (Zjuzins 60), Jagodinskis, Karasausks (Sabala 85), Rakels.

Sep 6 - Reykjavik
Iceland 0
Kazakhstan 0
Att: 9,767. **Ref:** Aranovskiy (Ukr)
Iceland: Halldorsson - B Saevarsson, Arnason, R Sigurdsson, A Skulason, J Gudmundsson, A Gunnarsson, G Sigurdsson, B Bjarnason, Bodvarsson (Kjartansson 85), Sigthorsson.
Sent off: A Gunnarsson 89.
Kazakhstan: Pokatilov - Gurman, Logvinenko, Maliy, Suyumbayev, Kuat, Smakov, Islamkhan, Dzholchiyev (Merkel 46), Nuserbayev (Schetkin 76), Konysbayev.

Sep 6 - Riga
Latvia 1 (Zjuzins 73)
Czech Republic 2 (Limbersky 13, Darida 25)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 7,913. **Ref:** Aytekin (Ger)
Latvia: Vanins - Freimanis (Gabovs 33), Gorkss, Dubra, Maksimenko, Kamess (A Visnakovs 29), Fertovs, Tarasovs, Zjuzins, Rakels, Karasausks (Cauna 66).
Czech Republic: Cech - Kaderabek, Suchy, Prochazka, Limbersky, Dockal (Gebre Selassie 90), Darida, Pavelka, Sural (Vanek 77), Skoda, Kolar (Krejci 54).

Sep 6 - Konya
Turkey 3 (Ozyakup 8, Arda 26, Burak 86)
Holland 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 41,007. **Ref:** Mateu Lahoz (Spa)
Turkey: Volkan Babacan - Sener, Serdar, Hakan Balta, Caner, Ozan, Selcuk Inan, Ozyakup (Sahan 83), Calhanoglu (Mehmet Topal 65), Burak, Arda (Volkan Sen 57).
Holland: Cillessen - Van der Wiel, De Vrij (Wijnaldum 46), Bruma, Riedewald, Klaassen, Blind (L De Jong 74), Sneijder, Narsingh (Promes 69), Van Persie, Depay.

EURO 2016 QUALIFIERS – GROUP A	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Iceland (Q)	8	6	1	1	15	3	19
Czech Rep (Q)	8	6	1	1	16	10	19
Turkey	8	3	3	2	11	9	12
Holland	8	3	1	4	13	10	10
Latvia	8	0	4	4	4	16	4
Kazakhstan	8	0	2	6	5	16	2

2014
Sep 9 Czech Republic v Holland 2-1
Iceland v Turkey 3-0
Kazakhstan v Latvia 0-0
Oct 10 Holland v Kazakhstan 3-1
Latvia v Iceland 0-3
Turkey v Czech Republic 1-2
Oct 13 Iceland v Holland 2-0
Kazakhstan v Czech Republic 2-4
Latvia v Turkey 1-1
Nov 16 Czech Republic v Iceland 2-1
Holland v Latvia 6-0
Turkey v Kazakhstan 3-1
2015
Mar 28 Czech Republic v Latvia 1-1
Holland v Turkey 1-1
Kazakhstan v Iceland 0-3
Jun 12 Iceland v Czech Republic 2-1
Kazakhstan v Turkey 0-1
Latvia v Holland 0-2
Sep 3 Czech Republic v Kazakhstan 2-1
Holland v Iceland 0-1
Turkey v Latvia 1-1
Sep 6 Iceland v Kazakhstan 0-0
Latvia v Czech Republic 1-2
Turkey v Holland 3-0
Oct 10 Czech Republic v Turkey
Iceland v Latvia
Kazakhstan v Holland
Oct 13 Holland v Czech Republic
Latvia v Kazakhstan
Turkey v Iceland

Group B

Sep 3 - Brussels
Belgium 3 (Fellaini 23, De Bruyne 44, E Hazard pen 78)
Bosnia-Herzegovina 1 (Dzeko 15)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 42,975. **Ref:** Sousa (Por)
Belgium: Courtois - Alderweireld, Kompany, Vermaelen, Vertonghen, Fellaini, Witsel, Nainggolan, De Bruyne (Mertens 89), Lukaku (Origi 82), E Hazard.
Bosnia-Herzegovina: Begovic - Mujdza, Vranjes, Spahic (Sunjic 56), Kolasinac (I Hajrovic 72), Medunjanin (Ibisevic 80), Besic, Lulic, Pjanic, Visca, Dzeko.

Sep 3 - Nicosia
Cyprus 0
Wales 1 (Bale 82)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 14,492. **Ref:** Marciniak (Pol)
Cyprus: Giorgallides - Demetriou, Dossa Junior, Laifis, Antoniades, Charalambides (Englezou 74), Nikolaou, Economides, Makrides, Mytidis (Kolokoudias 65), Makris (Sotiriou 84).
Wales: Hennessey - Gunter, B Davies, A Williams, King, N Taylor, D Edwards, Ramsey (MacDonald 90+3), Richards, Bale (Church 90), Robson-Kanu (Vokes 68).

Sep 3 - Haifa
Israel 4 (Zahavi 3, Biton 22, Hemed pen 26, Dabour 38)
Andorra 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 22,650. **Ref:** Bognar (Hun)
Israel: Marciano - Dasa, Tal Ben Haim/D (Melikson 46), Tibi, Rikan, Biton, Zahavi (Buzaglo 46), Natcho, Dabour, Hemed (Kayal 75), Tal Ben Haim/F.
Andorra: Pol - San Nicolas, Lima, E Garcia, M Garcia, C Martinez, M Vieira, Rebes (Llovera 81), Rodriguez (Sonejee 55), Moreno (Rubio 72), Sanchez.

Sep 6 - Zenica
Bosnia-Herzegovina 3 (Bicakcic 14, Dzeko 30, Lulic 45)
Andorra 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 6,830. **Ref:** Hunter (NIr)
Bosnia-Herzegovina: Begovic - Bicakcic, Sunjic, Spahic, Kolasinac (Vrancic 79), Zec, Besic, Pjanic (Hadzic 45), Lulic, Ibisevic, Dzeko (Djuric 68). *Sent off: Besic 63.*
Andorra: Pol - San Nicolas, Lima, Rebes, M Garcia, C Martinez (Sanchez 76), Sonejee, Ayala (Peppe 81), Rodriguez, M Vieira, Riera (Alves 87). *Sent off: Rodriguez 64.*

Sep 6 - Nicosia
Cyprus 0
Belgium 1 (E Hazard 86)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 11,866. **Ref:** Bezborodov (Rus)
Cyprus: Giorgallides - Demetriou, Dossa Junior, Laifis, Antoniades, Charalambides (Laban 53), Nikolaou (Artymatas 84), Economides, Makrides, Mytidis (Sotiriou 11), Makris.
Belgium: Courtois - Alderweireld, Kompany, Vermaelen, Vertonghen, Fellaini (Mertens 64), Witsel, Nainggolan, De Bruyne, E Hazard, Benteke (Origi 46).

Sep 6 - Cardiff
Wales 0
Israel 0
Att: 32,653. **Ref:** Bebek (Cro)
Wales: Hennessey - Richards, Gunter, A Williams, B Davies, N Taylor, King (Vokes 86), Ramsey, D Edwards, Robson-Kanu (Church 79), Bale.
Israel: Marciano - Dasa, Tal Ben Haim/D, Dgani, Tibi, Ben Harush, Zahavi (Sahar 90+3), Biton, Natcho, Kayal (Tal Ben Haim/F 46), Dabour (Hemed 46).

EURO 2016 QUALIFIERS – GROUP B	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Wales	8	5	3	0	9	2	18
Belgium	8	5	2	1	17	3	17
Israel	8	4	1	3	14	9	13
Bosnia-Herz	8	3	2	3	12	10	11
Cyprus	8	3	0	5	12	13	9
Andorra	8	0	0	8	3	30	0

2014
Sep 9 Andorra v Wales 1-2
Bosnia-Herzegovina v Cyprus 1-2
Oct 10 Belgium v Andorra 6-0
Cyprus v Israel 1-2
Wales v Bosnia-Herzegovina 0-0
Oct 13 Andorra v Israel 1-4
Bosnia-Herzegovina v Belgium 1-1
Wales v Cyprus 2-1
Nov 16 Belgium v Wales 0-0
Cyprus v Andorra 5-0
Israel v Bosnia-Herzegovina 3-0
2015
Mar 28 Andorra v Bosnia-Herzegovina 0-3
Belgium v Cyprus 5-0
Israel v Wales 0-3
Mar 31 Israel v Belgium 0-1
Jun 12 Andorra v Cyprus 1-3
Bosnia-Herzegovina v Israel 3-1
Wales v Belgium 1-0
Sep 3 Belgium v Bosnia-Herzegovina 3-1
Cyprus v Wales 0-1
Israel v Andorra 4-0
Sep 6 Bosnia-Herzegovina v Andorra 3-0
Cyprus v Belgium 0-1
Wales v Israel 0-0
Oct 10 Andorra v Belgium
Bosnia-Herzegovina v Wales
Israel v Cyprus
Oct 13 Belgium v Israel
Cyprus v Bosnia-Herzegovina
Wales v Andorra

Group C

Sep 5 - Luxembourg
Luxembourg 1 (Thill 90+2)
Macedonia 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 1,657. **Ref:** Evans (Wal)
Luxembourg: Joubert - Delgado, Philipps, Chanot, Jans, C Martins (Thill 72), Gerson, Payal, Da Mota, Deville (Bensi 64), Joachim.
Macedonia: Pacovski - Ristovski, Sikov, Mojsov (Ristevski 37), Zhuta, Gligorov, Petrovikj, A Ibraimi (Askovski 80), Abdurahimi, Trajkovski (Ilijoski 74), M Ivanovski.

Sep 5 - Oviedo
Spain 2 (Jordi Alba 5, Iniesta pen 30)
Slovakia 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 19,874. **Ref:** Skomina (Sln)
Spain: Casillas - Juanfran, Pique, Sergio Ramos, Jordi Alba, Fabregas (Cazorla 67), Busquets, Iniesta (Koke 85), Silva, Diego Costa (Paco Alcacer 75), Pedro.
Slovakia: Kozacik - Pekarik, Salata, Hubocan, Tesak, Gregus, Gyomber, Hamsik (Duda 61), Hrosovsky (Sabo 73), Mak (Duris 46), Svento.

Sep 5 - Lviv
Ukraine 3 (Kravets 7, Yarmolenko 30, Konoplyanka pen 40)
Belarus 1 (Kornilenko pen 62)
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 32,648. **Ref:** Liany (Isr)
Ukraine: Pyatov - Fedetskyi, Khacheridi, Rakitskyi, Shevchuk, Yarmolenko (Husiev 69), Rotan (Rybalka 75), Harmash, Stepanenko, Konoplyanka, Kravets (Hladkyi 86). *Sent off: Harmash 90+2.*
Belarus: Gorbunov - Shitov, Martynovich, Filipenko, Volodko, Stasevich, Maevski, Sivakov (Gordeichuk 46), Kalachev (Signevich 72), Hleb (Bressan 86), Kornilenko.

Sep 8 - Borisov
Belarus 2 (Gordeichuk 34, 62)
Luxembourg 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 3,482. **Ref:** Vincic (Sln)
Belarus: Zhevnov - Shitov, Sivakov, Filipenko, Bordachev, Dragun, Gordeichuk (Kalachev 75), Hleb (Kislyak 58), Bressan, Nekhaychik, Kornilenko (Signevich 84).
Luxembourg: Joubert - Philipps, Chanot, Schnell, Janisch, Jans, Payal (Da Mota 46), Mutsch, Gerson, Deville (Turpel 69), Joachim (Bensi 46).

Sep 8 - Skopje
Macedonia 0
Spain 1 (Pacovski og 8)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 28,843. **Ref:** Tagliavento (Ita)
Macedonia: Pacovski - Brdarovski, Sikov, Ristevski, Zhuta, Gligorov, Petrovikj, Radeski (A Ibraimi 84), Hasani, Askovski (Bardi 76), M Ivanovski (Trajkovski 68).
Spain: De Gea - Carvajal, Pique, Sergio Ramos, Bernat, Cazorla (Koke 68), Busquets, Isco (Iniesta 78), Mata, Diego Costa (Paco Alcacer 61), Silva.

Sep 8 - Zilina
Slovakia 0
Ukraine 0
Att: 10,648. **Ref:** Atkinson (Eng)
Slovakia: Kozacik - Pekarik (Salata 51), Skrtel, Hubocan, Gyomber, Mak (Stoch 84), Kucka, Hamsik, Pecovsky, Duris, Vittek (Jakubko 66).
Ukraine: Pyatov - Fedetskyi, Khacheridi, Rakitskyi, Shevchuk, Yarmolenko, Stepanenko, Rotan, Rybalka, Konoplyanka, Kravets (Hladkyi 90+1).

EURO 2016 QUALIFIERS – GROUP C	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Spain	8	7	0	1	18	3	21
Slovakia	8	6	1	1	13	5	19
Ukraine	8	5	1	2	12	3	16
Belarus	8	2	1	5	7	14	7
Luxembourg	8	1	1	6	4	19	4
Macedonia	8	1	0	7	6	16	3

2014
Sep 8 Luxembourg v Belarus 1-1
Spain v Macedonia 5-1
Ukraine v Slovakia 0-1
Oct 9 Belarus v Ukraine 0-2
Macedonia v Luxembourg 3-2
Slovakia v Spain 2-1
Oct 12 Belarus v Slovakia 1-3
Luxembourg v Spain 0-4
Ukraine v Macedonia 1-0
Nov 15 Luxembourg v Ukraine 0-3
Macedonia v Slovakia 0-2
Spain v Belarus 3-0
2015
Mar 27 Macedonia v Belarus 1-2
Slovakia v Luxembourg 3-0
Spain v Ukraine 1-0
Jun 14 Belarus v Spain 0-1
Slovakia v Macedonia 2-1
Ukraine v Luxembourg 3-0
Sep 5 Luxembourg v Macedonia 1-0
Spain v Slovakia 2-0
Ukraine v Belarus 3-1
Sep 8 Belarus v Luxembourg 2-0
Macedonia v Spain 0-1
Slovakia v Ukraine 0-0
Oct 9 Macedonia v Ukraine
Slovakia v Belarus
Spain v Luxembourg
Oct 12 Belarus v Macedonia
Luxembourg v Slovakia
Ukraine v Spain

Group D

Sep 4 - Tbilisi
Georgia 1 (Kazaishvili 38)
Scotland 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 23,000. **Ref:** Hategan (Rom)
Georgia: Revishvili - Lobzhanidze, Kverkvelia, Amisulashvili, Navalovski, Kashia, Okriashvili (Merebashvili 71), Ananidze (Daushvili 82), Kankava, Kazaishvili, Mchedlidze (Vatsadze 90+3).
Scotland: Marshall - Hutton, R Martin, Mulgrew, Robertson (Hanley 59), Anya (Griffiths 75), Brown, Maloney, Morrison, Naismith (Forrest 59), S Fletcher.

Sep 4 - Frankfurt
Germany 3 (T Muller 12, Gotze 19, 82)
Poland 1 (Lewandowski 37)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 48,500. **Ref:** Rizzoli (Ita)
Germany: Neuer - Can, Boateng, Hummels, Hector, Schweinsteiger, Kroos, T Muller, Ozil, Bellarabi (Gundogan 53), Gotze (Podolski 90+1).
Poland: Fabianski - Piszczek (Olkowski 43), Szukala, Glik, Rybus, Maczynski (Blaszczykowski 63), Jodlowiec, Krychowiak, Grosicki (Peszko 83), Lewandowski, Milik.

Sep 4 - Faro-Loule, Portugal
Gibraltar 0
Republic of Ireland 4 (Christie 26, Keane 49, pen 51, Long 79)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 5,393. **Ref:** Strahonja (Cro)
Gibraltar: J Perez - Garcia, Barnett, R Chipolina, J Chipolina, Sergeant (Guilling 85), Walker, Bardon, K Casciaro (Gosling 61), L Casciaro, J-P Duarte (Yome 73).
Rep Ireland: Given - Christie, O'Shea, Clark, Brady, Hoolahan (McGeady 77), McCarthy (Quinn 71), Whelan, Hendrick, Keane (Long 71), Walters.

Sep 7 - Warsaw
Poland 8 (Grosicki 8, 15, Lewandowski 18, 29, Milik 56, 72, Blaszczykowski pen 59, Kapustka 73)
Gibraltar 1 (Gosling 87)
HT: 4-0. **Att:** 27,600. **Ref:** Mazeika (Lit)
Poland: Fabianski - Olkowski (Mila 87), Szukala, Glik, Rybus, Blaszczykowski (Kapustka 62), Maczynski, Krychowiak, Milik, Grosicki, Lewandowski (Zielinski 66).
Gibraltar: J Perez - Garcia, Barnett, R Chipolina, J Chipolina, L Casciaro (Lopez 79), Bardon, Walker, Coombes (K Casciaro 46), Gosling, J-P Duarte (Bosio 68).

Sep 7 - Dublin
Republic of Ireland 1 (Walters 69)
Georgia 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 27,200. **Ref:** Vad (Hun)
Rep Ireland: Given - Coleman, O'Shea, Clark, Brady, Whelan, Hendrick, McCarthy, Hoolahan (McClean 75), Walters, Keane (Long 46).
Georgia: Revishvili - Lobzhanidze, Kverkvelia, Amisulashvili, Navalovski, Okriashvili, Kashia (Tsintsadze 76), Khizanishvili (Kenia 81), Kazaishvili (Papunashvili 64), Mchedlidze, Kankava.

Sep 7 - Glasgow
Scotland 2 (Hummels og 28, McArthur 43)
Germany 3 (T Muller 18, 34, Gundogan 54)
HT: 2-2. **Att:** 50,753. **Ref:** Kuipers (Hol)
Scotland: Marshall - Hutton, R Martin, Hanley, Mulgrew, Forrest (C Martin 81), Brown (Ritchie 81), Morrison, McArthur, Maloney (Anya 60), S Fletcher.
Germany: Neuer - Can, Boateng, Hummels, Hector, Schweinsteiger, Kroos, T Muller, Gundogan, Ozil (Kramer 90+2), Gotze (Schurrle 86).

EURO 2016 QUALIFIERS – GROUP D	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Germany	8	6	1	1	22	7	19
Poland	8	5	2	1	29	7	17
Rep Ireland	8	4	3	1	17	5	15
Scotland	8	3	2	3	14	10	11
Georgia	8	2	0	6	5	14	6
Gibraltar	8	0	0	8	2	46	0

2014
Sep 7 Georgia v Republic of Ireland 1-2
Germany v Scotland 2-1
Gibraltar v Poland 0-7
Oct 11 Poland v Germany 2-0
Republic of Ireland v Gibraltar 7-0
Scotland v Georgia 1-0
Oct 14 Germany v Republic of Ireland 1-1
Gibraltar v Georgia 0-3
Poland v Scotland 2-2
Nov 14 Georgia v Poland 0-4
Germany v Gibraltar 4-0
Scotland v Republic of Ireland 1-0
2015
Mar 29 Georgia v Germany 0-2
Republic of Ireland v Poland 1-1
Scotland v Gibraltar 6-1

Jun 13	Gibraltar v Germany	0-7
	Poland v Georgia	4-0
	Republic of Ireland v Scotland	1-1
Sep 4	Georgia v Scotland	1-0
	Germany v Poland	3-1
	Gibraltar v Republic of Ireland	0-4
Sep 7	Poland v Gibraltar	8-1
	Republic of Ireland v Georgia	1-0
	Scotland v Germany	2-3
Oct 8	Georgia v Gibraltar	
	Republic of Ireland v Germany	
	Scotland v Poland	
Oct 11	Germany v Georgia	
	Gibraltar v Scotland	
	Poland v Republic of Ireland	

Group E

Sep 5 - Tallinn
Estonia 1 (Vassiljev 71)
Lithuania 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 6,621. **Ref:** Drachta (Aut)
Estonia: Aksalu - Teniste, Jaager, Klavan, Pikk, Aleksandr Dmitrijev, Mets, Lindpere (Kallaste 67), Vassiljev (Luts 90+3), Zenjov, Purje (S Puri 86).
Lithuania: Arlauskis - D Cesnauskis (Freidgeimas 79), Zaliukas, Klimavicius, Vaitkunas, Cernych, Panka (Petravicius 78), Zulpa, Novikovas, Matulevicius (Spalvis 63), Slivka.

Sep 5 - Serravalle
San Marino 0
England 6 (Rooney pen 13, Brolli og 30, Barkley 46, Walcott 68, 78, Kane 77)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 4,378. **Ref:** Trattou (Cyp)
San Marino: A Simoncini - Bonini (Tosi 72), Brolli, D Simoncini (Alessandro Della Valle 81), Palazzi, Berardi, Hirsch, Battistini, Chiaruzzi, M Vitaioli, Selva (Rinaldi 75).
England: Hart - Clyne, Stones, Jagielka, Shaw, Milner (Delph 58), Shelvey, Barkley, Oxlade-Chamberlain (Walcott 67), Rooney (Kane 58), Vardy.

Sep 5 - Basle
Switzerland 3 (Drmic 80, 90+4, Stocker 84)
Slovenia 2 (Novakovic 45, Cesar 48)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 25,750. **Ref:** Kralovec (CzR)
Switzerland: Sommer - Lichtsteiner, Schar, Klose, Rodriguez, Behrami, Xhaka, Shaqiri, Dzemaili (Drmic 64), Mehmedi (Embolo 56), Seferovic (Stocker 80).
Slovenia: S Handanovic - Struna, Ilic, Cesar, Jokic, Stevanovic, Kurtic, Ilicic (Samardzic 90), Kampl, Birsa (Krhin 83), Novakovic (Pecnik 58).

Sep 8 - London
England 2 (Kane 67, Rooney pen 84)
Switzerland 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 75,751. **Ref:** Rocchi (Ita)
England: Hart - Clyne (Stones 68), Cahill, Smalling, Shaw, Milner, Shelvey (Kane 58), Delph (Barkley 3), Oxlade-Chamberlain, Rooney, Sterling.
Switzerland: Sommer - Lichtsteiner, Klose, Schar, Rodriguez, Xhaka, Inler, Behrami (Dzemaili 79), Shaqiri, Drmic (Embolo 63), Stocker (Seferovic 71).

Sep 8 - Vilnius
Lithuania 2 (Cernych 7, Spalvis 90+2)
San Marino 1 (M Vitaioli 55)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 2,856. **Ref:** Pisani (Mlt)
Lithuania: Arlauskis - Freidgeimas, Zaliukas, Klimavicius, Slavickas (Matulevicius 73), Cernych, Pilibaitis (Chvedukas 82), Zulpa, Novikovas, Spalvis, Slivka (Cerniauskas 53).
Sent off: Arlauskis 50.
San Marino: Benedettini - Battistini, F Vitaioli, Alessandro Della Valle, Brolli, Palazzi, M Vitaioli (Selva 80), L Gasperoni (Berretti 68), Chiaruzzi, Rinaldi, Stefanelli (Hirsch 73).
Sent off: Chiaruzzi 88.

Sep 8 - Maribor
Slovenia 1 (Beric 63)
Estonia 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 6,868. **Ref:** Sidiropoulos (Gre)
Slovenia: S Handanovic - Struna, Ilic, Cesar, Jokic, Krhin (Rotman 88), Kurtic, Ilicic (Ljubijankic 55), Kampl, Birsa, Beric (Lazarevic 77).
Estonia: Aksalu - Teniste, Jaager, Klavan, Pikk, Zenjov (S Puri 46), Lindpere (Teever 84), Mets, Vassiljev, Kallaste (Luts 88), Purje.

EURO 2016 QUALIFIERS – GROUP E

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
England (Q)	8	8	0	0	26	3	24
Switzerland	8	5	0	3	16	8	15
Slovenia	8	4	0	4	15	10	12
Estonia	8	3	1	4	4	6	10
Lithuania	8	3	0	5	6	14	9
San Marino	8	0	1	7	1	27	1

2014

Sep 8	Estonia v Slovenia	1-0
	San Marino v Lithuania	0-2
	Switzerland v England	0-2
Oct 9	England v San Marino	5-0
	Lithuania v Estonia	1-0
	Slovenia v Switzerland	1-0
Oct 12	Estonia v England	0-1
	Lithuania v Slovenia	0-2
Oct 14	San Marino v Switzerland	0-4
Nov 15	England v Slovenia	3-1
	San Marino v Estonia	0-0
	Switzerland v Lithuania	4-0

2015

Mar 27	England v Lithuania	4-0
	Slovenia v San Marino	6-0
	Switzerland v Estonia	3-0
Jun 14	Estonia v San Marino	2-0
	Lithuania v Switzerland	1-2
	Slovenia v England	2-3
Sep 5	Estonia v Lithuania	1-0
	San Marino v England	0-6
	Switzerland v Slovenia	3-2
Sep 8	England v Switzerland	2-0
	Lithuania v San Marino	2-1
	Slovenia v Estonia	1-0
Oct 9	England v Estonia	
	Slovenia v Lithuania	
	Switzerland v San Marino	
Oct 12	Estonia v Switzerland	
	Lithuania v England	
	San Marino v Slovenia	

Group F

Sep 4 - Torshavn
Faroe Islands 1 (Edmundsson 36)
Northern Ireland 3 (McAuley 12, 71, K Lafferty 75)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 4,513. **Ref:** Zwayer (Ger)
Faroe Islands: Nielsen - Naes, Nattestad, Faero, Sorensen, Benjaminsen (Baldvinsson 87), Vatnhamar, Hendriksen (K Olsen 83), Hansson, Holst (P Justinussen 76), Edmundsson.
Sent off: Edmundsson 65.
Northern Ireland: McGovern - C McLaughlin (Magennis 70), J Evans, McAuley, Brunt (Ferguson 83), Davis, Baird, Norwood, Dallas, McGinn, K Lafferty (McNair 78).

Sep 4 - Piraeus
Greece 0
Finland 1 (Pohjanpalo 75)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 17,358. **Ref:** Boiko (Ukr)
Greece: Karnezis - Vyntra, Papastathopoulos, K Papadopoulos, Holebas, Samaris (Tachtsidis 86), Tziolis, Aravidis (Kone 68), Fortounis, Karelis (Fountas 77), Mitroglou.
Finland: Hradecky - Arkivuo, Halsti, Arajuuri, Uronen, Sparv, Toivio, Ring, Hamalainen (Sadik 46; Mattila 81), P Hetemaj, Pukki (Pohjanpalo 67).

Sep 4 - Budapest
Hungary 0
Romania 0
Att: 22,060. **Ref:** Brych (Ger)
Hungary: Kiraly - Fiola, Juhasz (Guzmics 24), Kadar, Leandro, Stieber (Priskin 88), Elek, Tozser, Dzsudzsak, Szalai, Nikolic (Nemeth 70).
Romania: Tatarusanu - Papp, D Grigore, Chiriches, Rat, Prepelita, Hoban, Popa (Chipciu 68), Sanmartean (Budescu 78), Torje (Maxim 90), Keseru.

Sep 7 - Helsinki
Finland 1 (Pohjanpalo 23)
Faroe Islands 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 9,477. **Ref:** Borski (Pol)
Finland: Hradecky - Arkivuo, Halsti, Arajuuri, Uronen, Ring, Lam (Mattila 84), Sparv, P Hetemaj, Riku Riski (T Vayrynen 74), Pohjanpalo (Hamalainen 90+3).
Faroe Islands: Nielsen - Naes, Nattestad, Gregersen, Sorensen, Vatnhamar, Hendriksson, Benjaminsen (Baldvinsson 84), Hansson, Holst (Bartalsstovu 57), K Olsen (F Justinussen 75).

Sep 7 - Belfast
Northern Ireland 1 (K Lafferty 90+3)
Hungary 1 (Guzmics 74)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 10,200. **Ref:** Cakir (Tur)
Northern Ireland: McGovern - C McLaughlin, McAuley, J Evans, Brunt, C Evans (McGinn 56), Norwood (Magennis 75), Baird, Davis, Dallas (Ferguson 84), K Lafferty. *Sent off: Baird 81.*
Hungary: Kiraly - Fiola, Guzmics, Kadar, Leandro, Nemeth (Vanczak 89), Elek (Nagy 22), Kalmar, Gera, Dzsudzsak, Szalai (Priskin 68).

Sep 7 - Bucharest
Romania 0
Greece 0
Att: 38,153. **Ref:** Kulbakov (Bls)
Romania: Tatarusanu - Papp, Chiriches, D Grigore, Rat, Torje, Hoban (Andone 80), Pintilii, Maxim (Popa 64), Budescu (Sanmartean 64), Keseru.
Greece: Karnezis - Holebas, Papastathopoulos, Manolas, Kitsiou, Aravidis, Tziolis, Samaris, Fortounis (Kone 54), Fetfatzidis (Vyntra 46), Mitroglou (Karelis 87).

EURO 2016 QUALIFIERS – GROUP F

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
N Ireland	8	5	2	1	12	6	17
Romania	8	4	4	0	7	1	16
Hungary	8	3	4	1	6	4	13
Finland	8	3	1	4	7	8	10
Faroe Islands	8	2	0	6	5	12	6
Greece	8	0	3	5	2	8	3

2014

Sep 7	Faroe Islands v Finland	1-3
	Greece v Romania	0-1
	Hungary v Northern Ireland	1-2
Oct 11	Finland v Greece	1-1
	Northern Ireland v Faroe Islands	2-0
	Romania v Hungary	1-1
Oct 14	Faroe Islands v Hungary	0-1
	Finland v Romania	0-2
	Greece v Northern Ireland	0-2
Nov 14	Greece v Faroe Islands	0-1
	Hungary v Finland	1-0
	Romania v Northern Ireland	2-0

2015

Mar 29	Hungary v Greece	0-0
	Northern Ireland v Finland	2-1
	Romania v Faroe Islands	1-0
Jun 13	Faroe Islands v Greece	2-1
	Finland v Hungary	0-1
	Northern Ireland v Romania	0-0
Sep 4	Faroe Islands v Northern Ireland	1-3
	Greece v Finland	0-1
	Hungary v Romania	0-0
Sep 7	Finland v Faroe Islands	1-0
	Northern Ireland v Hungary	1-1
	Romania v Greece	0-0
Oct 8	Hungary v Faroe Islands	
	Northern Ireland v Greece	
	Romania v Finland	
Oct 11	Faroe Islands v Romania	
	Finland v Northern Ireland	
	Greece v Hungary	

Group G

Sep 5 - Vienna
Austria 1 (Junuzovic 52)
Moldova 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 48,500. **Ref:** Stavrev (Mac)
Austria: Almer - Klein, Prodl, Dragovic, Fuchs, Harnik (Jantscher 76), Baumgartlinger, Alaba (Ilsanker 90+2), Arnautovic, Junuzovic, Janko (Okotie 84).
Moldova: Cebanu - Golovatenco, Erhan, Cojocari, Armas, Jardan, Dedov, Andronic (Racu 55), Cebotaru (Ginsari 79), Patras, Milinceanu (Carp 87).

Sep 5 - Podgorica
Montenegro 2 (Beciraj 38, Jovetic 56)
Liechtenstein 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Estrada Fernandez (Spa)
Played behind closed doors
Montenegro: Poleksic - Savic, Basa, Tomasevic, Volkov, Boljevic, N Vukcevic, Marusic (Zverotic 69), Jovetic (Mugosa 69), Beciraj, Vucinic (Damjanovic 59).
Liechtenstein: Jehle - Yildiz, Frick, Kaufmann, Rechsteiner, A Christen, M Buchel (Gubser 86), Polverino, Wieser (Salanovic 66), Burgmeier (N Kieber 76), N Hasler.

Sep 5 - Moscow
Russia 1 (Dzyuba 38)
Sweden 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 43,768. **Ref:** Clattenburg (Eng)
Russia: Akinfeev - Smolnikov, V Berezutsky, Ignashevich, Zhirkov (Kuzmin 71), Shirokov (A Berezutsky 83), Dzagoev, Denisov, Kokorin, Dzyuba (Ionov 79), Shatov.
Sweden: Isaksson - P Bengtsson (Berg 60), Antonsson, Granqvist, M Olsson, S Larsson, Wernbloom, Durmaz, Ekdal (Kiese Thelin 82), Forsberg, Ibrahimovic (Toivonen 46).

Sep 8 - Vaduz
Liechtenstein 0
Russia 7 (Dzyuba 21, 45, 73, 90, Kokorin pen 40, Smolov 77, Dzagoev 85)
HT: 0-3. **Att:** 2,874. **Ref:** Madden (Sco)
Liechtenstein: Jehle - Rechsteiner, Frick, Kaufmann, Burgmeier, N Kieber (Sele 77), M Buchel (Gubser 84), Polverino, N Hasler, Yildiz, Salanovic (A Christen 88).
Sent off: Kaufmann 40.
Russia: Akinfeev - Smolnikov, Ignashevich, V Berezutsky, D Kombarov, Dzagoev, Denisov (Glushakov 46), Shirokov (Smolov 75), Kokorin, Shatov (Mamaev 65), Dzyuba.

Sep 8 - Chisinau
Moldova 0
Montenegro 2 (Savic 9, Racu og 65)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 6,243. **Ref:** Delferiere (Blg)
Moldova: Cebanu - Jardan, Golovatenco, Armas, Erhan, Cojocari, Dedov, Gatcan, Cebotaru (Racu 36), Patras (Ginsari 71), Milinceanu.
Montenegro: Poleksic - Savic, Basa, Simic, Tomasevic, Marusic (Mandic 69), Boljevic, N Vukcevic, Beciraj, Jovetic (Kascelan 88), Damjanovic (Mugosa 46).

Sep 8 - Stockholm
Sweden 1 (Ibrahimovic 90+1)
Austria 4 (Alaba pen 9, Harnik 38, 88, Janko 77)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 48,355. **Ref:** Velasco Carballo (Spa)
Sweden: Isaksson - S Larsson, Antonsson, Granqvist, M Olsson (Durmaz 82), Zengin (Kiese Thelin 62), Ekdal (Khalili 86), Kallstrom, Forsberg, Berg, Ibrahimovic.
Austria: Almer - Klein, Prodl, Dragovic, Fuchs, Baumgartlinger, Alaba, Harnik, Junuzovic (Sabitzer 80), Arnautovic (Jantscher 88), Janko (Ilsanker 84).

EURO 2016 QUALIFIERS – GROUP G

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Austria (Q)	8	7	1	0	16	3	22
Russia	8	4	2	2	17	4	14
Sweden	8	3	3	2	11	9	12
Montenegro	8	3	2	3	8	8	11
Liechtenstein	8	1	2	5	2	21	5
Moldova	8	0	2	6	3	12	2

2014

Sep 8	Austria v Sweden	1-1
	Montenegro v Moldova	2-0
	Russia v Liechtenstein	4-0
Oct 9	Liechtenstein v Montenegro	0-0
	Moldova v Austria	1-2
	Sweden v Russia	1-1
Oct 12	Austria v Montenegro	1-0
	Russia v Moldova	1-1
	Sweden v Liechtenstein	2-0
Nov 15	Austria v Russia	1-0
	Moldova v Liechtenstein	0-1
	Montenegro v Sweden	1-1

2015

Mar 27	Liechtenstein v Austria	0-5
	Moldova v Sweden	0-2
	Montenegro v Russia (awarded)	0-3
Jun 14	Liechtenstein v Moldova	1-1
	Russia v Austria	0-1
	Sweden v Montenegro	3-1
Sep 5	Austria v Moldova	1-0
	Montenegro v Liechtenstein	2-0
	Russia v Sweden	1-0
Sep 8	Liechtenstein v Russia	0-7
	Moldova v Montenegro	0-2
	Sweden v Austria	1-4
Oct 9	Liechtenstein v Sweden	
	Moldova v Russia	
	Montenegro v Austria	
Oct 12	Austria v Liechtenstein	
	Russia v Montenegro	
	Sweden v Moldova	

Group H

Sep 3 - Baku
Azerbaijan 0
Croatia 0
Att: 10,000. **Ref:** Buquet (Fra)
Azerbaijan: K Agayev - Mirzabekov, B Huseynov, R F Sadygov, Dashdemirov, Qarayev, Ismayilov, Amirguliyev, Nazarov (Eddy 90), R Kurbanov (Nadirov 79), M Kurbanov (R A Sadygov 63).
Croatia: Subasic - Vrsaljko, Corluka, Vida, Pranjic, Badelj (Kovacic 59), Modric (Brozovic 71), Pjaca, Rakitic, Perisic (N Kalinic 83), Mandzukic.

Sep 3 - Sofia
Bulgaria 0
Norway 1 (Forren 57)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 12,913. **Ref:** Nijhuis (Hol)
Bulgaria: Mitrev - Bandalovski, A Aleksandrov, Bodurov, Y Minev, Manolev (Tonev 61), Dyakov, Chochev, G Milanov (Nedelev 78), Micanski (Rangelov 68), I Popov.
Norway: Nyland - Elabdellaoui, Hovland, Forren (Nordtveit 75), Hogli, Tettey, Johansen (Strandberg 87), Samuelsen (Skjelbred 64), Henriksen, Berget, Soderlund.

Sep 3 - Florence
Italy 1 (Pelle 69)
Malta 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 12,551. **Ref:** Kruzliak (Slk)
Italy: Buffon - Darmian, Bonucci, Chiellini, Pasqual, Verratti (Soriano 77), Pirlo, Bertolacci (Parolo 55), Gabbiadini (Candreva 64), Pelle, Eder.
Malta: Hogg - A Muscat, S Borg, Z Muscat, Agius, Failla, R Muscat, P Fenech, Briffa (Sciberras 90+1), Effiong (M Mifsud 90+3), Schembri (Kristensen 73).

Sep 6 - Palermo
Italy 1 (De Rossi pen 6)
Bulgaria 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 21,000. **Ref:** Karasev (Rus)
Italy: Buffon - Darmian, Bonucci, Chiellini, De Sciglio, Candreva (Eder 86), Verratti, De Rossi, Parolo, El Shaarawy (Florenzi 73), Pelle (Zaza 73). *Sent off: De Rossi 55.*
Bulgaria: Mitrev - V Minev, A Aleksandrov, Bodurov, Y Minev (Bandalovski 64), Dyakov, Chochev, Nedelev (M Aleksandrov 67), I Popov (Rangelov 71), G Milanov, Micanski. *Sent off: Micanski 55.*

Sep 6 - Valletta
Malta 2 (M Mifsud 55, Effiong 71)
Azerbaijan 2 (Amirguliyev 36, 80)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 5,266. **Ref:** Lechner (Aut)
Malta: Hogg - A Muscat, Agius, S Borg, Camilleri (Zerafa 80), Failla (S Pisani 85), Schembri, Briffa, R Muscat, Effiong, M Mifsud (Cohen 62).
Azerbaijan: K Agayev - Mirzabekov, B Huseynov, Qarayev, R F Sadygov, Dashdemirov, Ismayilov (Abdullayev 72), Nazarov (R A Sadygov 70), Amirguliyev, Taghiyev, R Kurbanov (Aliyev 81).

Sep 6 - Oslo
Norway 2 (Berget 51, Corluka og 69)
Croatia 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 26,751. **Ref:** Kassai (Hun)
Norway: Nyland - Elabdellaoui, Hovland, Forren, Hogli, Skjelbred (Nielsen 90+1), Tettey, Johansen (Nordtveit 90+2), Henriksen, Berget, Soderlund (Berisha 90+4).
Croatia: Subasic - Srna, Corluka, Vida, Vrsaljko, Brozovic, Modric, Perisic, Rakitic (N Kalinic 72), Pjaca (Olic 63), Mandzukic.

EURO 2016 QUALIFIERS – GROUP H

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Italy	8	5	3	0	11	5	18
Norway	8	5	1	2	10	8	16
Croatia[1]	8	4	3	1	16	5	14
Bulgaria	8	2	2	4	7	9	8
Azerbaijan	8	1	3	4	6	13	6
Malta	8	0	2	6	3	13	2

[1] 1pt deducted after a swastika was painted on the pitch before the home game against Italy

2014
Sep 9 Azerbaijan v Bulgaria 1-2
Croatia v Malta 2-0
Norway v Italy 0-2
Oct 10 Bulgaria v Croatia 0-1
Italy v Azerbaijan 2-1
Malta v Norway 0-3
Oct 13 Croatia v Azerbaijan 6-0
Malta v Italy 0-1
Norway v Bulgaria 2-1
Nov 16 Azerbaijan v Norway 0-1
Bulgaria v Malta 1-1
Italy v Croatia 1-1
2015
Mar 28 Azerbaijan v Malta 2-0
Bulgaria v Italy 2-2
Croatia v Norway 5-1
Jun 12 Croatia v Italy 1-1
Malta v Bulgaria 0-1
Norway v Azerbaijan 0-0
Sep 3 Azerbaijan v Croatia 0-0
Bulgaria v Norway 0-1
Italy v Malta 1-0
Sep 6 Italy v Bulgaria 1-0
Malta v Azerbaijan 2-2
Norway v Croatia 2-0
Oct 10 Azerbaijan v Italy
Croatia v Bulgaria
Norway v Malta
Oct 13 Bulgaria v Azerbaijan
Italy v Norway
Malta v Croatia

Group I

Sep 4 - Copenhagen
Denmark 0
Albania 0
Att: 35,648. **Ref:** Collum (Sco)
Denmark: Schmeichel - Jacobsen, Kjaer, Agger, Durmisi, Hojbjerg, Kvist (J Poulsen 46), Sisto (Y Poulsen 46), Krohn-Dehli, N Jorgensen, Bendtner.
Albania: Berisha - Djimsiti, Cana, Ajeti, Agolli, Gashi (Roshi 83), Xhaka, Kukeli, Abrashi (Basha 64), Lenjani (Sadiku 64), Cikalleshi.

Sep 4 - Novi Sad
Serbia 2 (Hayrapetyan og 22, Ljajic 53)
Armenia 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Zelinka (CzR)
Played behind closed doors
Serbia: Stojkovic - Tomovic, Ivanovic, Spajic, Kolarov, Brasanac, Matic, Zivkovic (Z Tosic 59), Ljajic (Fejsa 73), Kostic (Tadic 84), A Mitrovic.
Armenia: Kasparov - Mkoyan, Arzumanyan, Andonian, Hayrapetyan, Ozbiliz (Hovhannisyan 59), Mkhitaryan, Pizzelli (Koryan 65), Mkrtchyan, Ghazaryan (Simonyan 82), Movsisyan.

Sep 7 - Elbasan
Albania 0
Portugal 1 (Miguel Veloso 90+2)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 12,121. **Ref:** Eriksson (Swe)
Albania: Berisha - Djimsiti, Cana, Ajeti, Agolli, Kukeli, Xhaka, Cikalleshi (Balaj 86), Abrashi (Basha 54), Gashi (Roshi 70), Lenjani.
Portugal: Rui Patricio - Vieirinha (Cedric 54), Pepe, Ricardo Carvalho, Eliseu, Nani, Danilo Pereira, Miguel Veloso, Danny (Eder 76), Cristiano Ronaldo, Bernardo Silva (Quaresma 65).

Sep 7 - Yerevan
Armenia 0
Denmark 0
Att: 7,500. **Ref:** Moen (Nor)
Armenia: Kasparov - Mkoyan, Arzumanyan, Haroyan, Andonian, Hovhannisyan (Simonyan 87), Mkhitaryan, Pizzelli (Koryan 62), Mkrtchyan, Ghazaryan, Movsisyan (Ozbiliz 83).
Denmark: Schmeichel - Jacobsen, Kjaer (Sviatchenko 80), Agger, Durmisi, Hojbjerg, Krohn-Dehli (Delaney 56), J Poulsen, Y Poulsen, Bendtner, N Jorgensen (Braithwaite 64).

EURO 2016 QUALIFIERS – GROUP I

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Portugal	6	5	0	1	8	4	15
Denmark	7	3	3	1	8	4	12
Albania	6	3	2	1	7	3	11
Armenia	7	0	2	5	5	11	2
Serbia[1]	6	1	1	4	5	11	1

[1] 3pts deducted for the fan violence that led to the abandonment of the home game against Albania

2014
Sep 7 Denmark v Armenia 2-1
Portugal v Albania 0-1
Oct 11 Albania v Denmark 1-1
Armenia v Serbia 1-1
Oct 14 Denmark v Portugal 0-1
Serbia v Albania (awarded) 0-3
Nov 14 Portugal v Armenia 1-0
Serbia v Denmark 1-3
2015
Mar 29 Albania v Armenia 2-1
Portugal v Serbia 2-1
Jun 13 Armenia v Portugal 2-3
Denmark v Serbia 2-0
Sep 4 Denmark v Albania 0-0
Serbia v Armenia 2-0
Sep 7 Albania v Portugal 0-1
Armenia v Denmark 0-0
Oct 8 Albania v Serbia
Portugal v Denmark
Oct 11 Armenia v Albania
Serbia v Portugal

● *The top 2 in each group and the 3rd-placed team with the best record will qualify for the 24-team finals; the other 8 3rd-placed teams will be paired in 4 play-offs, the winners of which will also qualify for the finals. Hosts France qualify automatically*

2017 AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS

Group A

Sep 4 - Djibouti
Djibouti 0
Togo 2 (Akakpo 5, F Ayite 43)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Malong (SSu)

Sep 5 - Monrovia
Liberia 1 (Doe 79)
Tunisia 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Jallow (Gam)
Tunisia: A Mathlouthi - Naguez (Chermiti 84), S Ben Youssef, Abdennour, Ben Djemia, Ragued, Lahmar, Brigui, Msakni (F Ben Youssef 70), Chikhaoui, Khalifa.

2017 AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Togo	2	2	0	0	4	1	6
Liberia	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Tunisia	2	1	0	1	8	2	3
Djibouti	2	0	0	2	1	10	0

Group B

Sep 6 - Bangui
Central African Republic 2 (Mabide pen 27, Gourrier 33)
DR Congo 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Effa (Cam)

Sep 6 - Antananarivo
Madagascar 0
Angola 0
Ref: Rachide (Moz)

2017 AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Angola	2	1	1	0	4	0	4
Cent Af Rep	2	1	0	1	2	4	3
DR Congo	2	1	0	1	2	3	3
Madagascar	2	0	1	1	1	2	1

Group C

Sep 5 - Juba
South Sudan 1 (Lual 51)
Equatorial Guinea 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Mujuni (Tan)

Sep 6 - Cotonou
Benin 1 (Sessegnon 33)
Mali 1 (Diaby 19)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Otogo-Castane (Gab)

2017 AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GP C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Mali	2	1	1	0	3	1	4
South Sudan	2	1	0	1	1	2	3
Benin	2	0	2	0	2	2	2
Equat Guinea	2	0	1	1	1	2	1

Group D

Sep 5 - Francistown
Botswana 1 (Mogorosi 51)
Burkina Faso 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Nunkoo (Mrs)

Sep 5 - Mitsamiouli
Comoros 0
Uganda 1 (Mawejje 26)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Barra (Sey)

2017 AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GP D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Uganda	2	2	0	0	3	0	6
Botswana	2	1	0	1	1	2	3
Burkina Faso	2	1	0	1	2	1	3
Comoros	2	0	0	2	0	3	0

Group E

Sep 5 - Bissau
Guinea-Bissau 2 (Zezinho 63, 80)
Congo 4 (Dore 28, 31, 61, 64)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Bangoura (Gui)

Sep 6 - Nairobi
Kenya 1 (Olunga 13)
Zambia 2 (Kalengo 29, Mbesuma 43)
HT: 1-2. **Ref:** Khairalla (Sud)

2017 AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GP E

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Congo	2	1	1	0	5	3	4
Zambia	2	1	1	0	2	1	4
Kenya	2	0	1	1	2	3	1
Guinea-Bissau	2	0	1	1	2	4	1

Group F

Sep 5 - Sao Tome
Sao Tome e Principe 0
Morocco 3 (Amrabat 34, El Arabi 38, Dirar 41)
HT: 0-3. **Ref:** Goma (Ang)
Morocco: Munir - Lazaar, El Adoua, Da Costa, Chafik, El Ahmadi, Obbadi, Amrabat (Assaidi 72), El Kaddouri, Dirar, El Arabi (Iajour 78).

Sep 6 - Cairo, Egypt
Libya 1 (Al Mosrati 85)
Cape Verde Islands 2 (Kay 57, Ryan Mendes 89)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Ghorbal (Alg)

2017 AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GP F

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cape Verde	2	2	0	0	9	2	6
Morocco	2	2	0	0	4	0	6
Libya	2	0	0	2	1	3	0
Sao Tome	2	0	0	2	1	10	0

Group G

Sep 5 - Dar es Salaam
Tanzania 0
Nigeria 0
Ref: Hakizimana (Rwa)
Nigeria: Ikeme - Omeruo, Kwambe, Madu, Troost-Ekong, Obiora, Uzochukwu, Haruna (Igbonu 36), Emenike (Ujah 61), Musa, Simon (Eduok 69).

Sep 6 - N'Djamena
Chad 1 (Haroun 37)
Egypt 5 (Morsi 2, 24, 61, M Salah 39, Kahraba 55)
HT: 1-3. **Ref:** Sinko (IvC)
Egypt: El Shenawy - Emam, Rabia, Hegazy, Abdel-Shafy, I Salah (Tawfik 52), El Nenny, Sobhy (Trezeguet 52), Kahraba, M Salah, Morsi (Zakaria 64).

2017 AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GP G

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Egypt	2	2	0	0	8	1	6
Nigeria	2	1	1	0	2	0	4
Tanzania	2	0	1	1	0	3	1
Chad	2	0	0	2	1	7	0

Group H

Sep 5 - Kigali
Rwanda 0
Ghana 1 (Wakaso 87)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Wiish (Som)
Ghana: Brimah - Amartey, Afful, Boye, Rahman, Wakaso, Boakye Yiadom (Asante 60), Atsu (Schlupp 90), Acquah, A Ayew, J Ayew.

Sep 6 - Curepipe
Mauritius 1 (Pithia 47)
Mozambique 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Aden Abdi (Dji)

2017 AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GP H

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ghana	2	2	0	0	8	1	6
Rwanda	2	1	0	1	1	1	3
Mauritius	2	1	0	1	2	7	3
Mozambique	2	0	0	2	0	2	0

Group I

Sep 6 - Port Harcourt, Nigeria
Sierra Leone 0
Ivory Coast 0
Ref: Keita (Mli)
Ivory Coast: Gbohouo - Traore (Bagayoko 67), Seri (Diomande 46), Viera, Bailly, Serey Die, Akpa Akpro, Kalou, Aurier, Doumbia (Sio 62), Gervinho.

2017 AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GP I

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sudan	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Ivory Coast	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Sierra Leone	2	0	1	1	0	1	1

Group J

Sep 5 - Victoria
Seychelles 1 (Laurence pen 22)
Ethiopia 1 (Tesfaye 52)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Nampiandraza (Mad)
Sent off: Vidot (Seychelles) 48

Sep 6 - Maseru
Lesotho 1 (Mokhahlane 38)
Algeria 3 (Ghoulam 32, Soudani 85, 90+1)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Pavaza (Nam)
Algeria: Doukha - Zeffane, Mandi, Medjani, Ghoulam, Taider, Mesloub, Mahrez, Boudebouz (Soudani 46), Brahimi, Slimani (Bounedjah 69).

2017 AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GP J

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Algeria	2	2	0	0	7	1	6
Ethiopia	2	1	1	0	3	2	4
Seychelles	2	0	1	1	1	5	1
Lesotho	2	0	0	2	2	5	0

Group K

Sep 5 - Bujumbura
Burundi 2 (Abdul Razak 21, Papy 83)
Niger 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Kirwa (Ken)

Sep 5 - Windhoek
Namibia 0
Senegal 2 (Kouyate 36, S Mane 56)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Kaoma (Zam)

2017 AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GP K

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Senegal	2	2	0	0	5	1	6
Burundi	2	1	0	1	3	3	3
Niger	2	1	0	1	1	2	3
Namibia	2	0	0	2	0	3	0

Group L

Sep 6 - Lobamba
Swaziland 2 (Badenhorst 17, Ndzinisa 62)
Malawi 2 (G Phiri 8, C Msowoya 21)
HT: 1-2. **Ref:** Koto (Les)

Sep 6 - Harare
Zimbabwe 1 (Musona 36)
Guinea 1 (Idrissa Sylla 2)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Johannes (Bot)

2017 AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GP L

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Swaziland	2	1	1	0	4	3	4
Zimbabwe	2	1	1	0	3	2	4
Malawi	2	0	1	1	3	4	1
Guinea	2	0	1	1	2	3	1

Group M

Sep 5 - Nouakchott
Mauritania 3 (Abeid 5, Beiguily 77, Ahmed 85)
South Africa 1 (Gabuza 68)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Gueye (Sen)
South Africa: Khune - Ngcongca, Coetzee, Mathoho, Zulu, Jali, Masango (Vilakazi 87), Furman (Zungu 63), Serero, Rantie (Mashaba 53), Gabuza. *Sent off: Zulu 49.*

Sep 6 - Bakau
Gambia 0
Cameroon 1 (Aboubakar 65)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Kordi (Tun)

2017 AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GP M

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cameroon	2	2	0	0	2	0	6
Mauritania	2	1	0	1	3	2	3
Gambia	2	0	1	1	0	1	1
South Africa	2	0	1	1	1	3	1

Remaining matchdays
2016
Mar 23-26; Mar 26-29; Jun 3-5; Sep 2-4

● *The13 group winners and the 2 runners-up with the best record (excluding 3-team Group I) will qualify for the16-team finals. Hosts Gabon qualify automatically*

FRIENDLIES

Tuesday, September 1

Sep1 - Brazzaville
Congo 2 (Babele 54, Binguila 90+1)
Ghana 3 (Babele og 17, Boakye Yiadom 19, J Ayew 90+2)
HT: 0-2
Ghana: Brimah (Dauda 46) - Afful (Frimpong 46), Gyimah, Lartey, Rahman, Adjei (J Ayew 46), Acquah, Atsu (A Ayew 80), Bernard Mensah (Gyan 73), Asante (Tetteh 90), Boakye Yiadom (Baba Mensah 63).

Thursday, September 3

Sep 3 - Manila
Philippines 2 (Samdhooh og 48, Lucena 58)
Maldives 0
HT: 0-0

Sep 3 - Bangkok
Thailand 2 (Mongkol 28, Teerasil 60)
Afghanistan 0
HT: 1-0

Friday, September 4

Sep 4 - Houston, USA
Argentina 7 (Lavezzi 5, 41, Aguero 33, 59, Messi 67, 75, Correa 84)
Bolivia 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 29,000. **Ref:** Ramos (Mex)
Argentina: Romero - Casco (Roncaglia 76), G Rodriguez, Funes Mori, Mas, Pereyra, Kranevitter, Lamela (Banega 76), Lavezzi (Correa 81), Aguero (Tevez 81), Gaitan (Messi 65).
Bolivia: Daniel Vaca - Hurtado, Raldes, Zenteno, Cardozo (Eguino 46), Veizaga, Melean (Chumacero 46), D Bejarano (Lizio 46), Smedberg-Dalence (Ramallo 64), Arce (Cabrera 46), Moreno.

Sep 4 - Sandy, USA
Mexico 3 (Esquivel 40, R Jimenez 55, H Herrera 84)
Trinidad & Tobago 3 (Glenn 6, Cummings 38, J Jones 69)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Skeete (Bar)
Mexico: Talavera - Torres Nilo, Reyes, Alanis (Moreno 72), I Jimenez, Aquino, Guemez, Duenas (H Herrera 73), Esquivel, Vela, Martin (R Jimenez 54).
Trinidad & Tobago: J-M Williams - David, J Jones (Hackshaw 87), Abu Bakr (M Williams 63), Glenn (Plaza 78), Hyland, Cato (Caesar 57), Boucaud (George 70), Marshall, Cummings, Cyrus.

Sep 4 - Panama City
Panama 0
Uruguay 1 (Stuani 81)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Polanco (Gtm)
Panama: Calderon - Cummings (Parris 15), R Torres, Gomez, B Perez, Cooper, Machado, Blackburn (Tejada 58), L Henriquez, Quintero (Addles 78), Godoy.
Uruguay: Muslera - M Pereira (Mayada 83), Gimenez (Coates 46), Godin, Caceres, Sanchez (Corujo 67), Arevalo, A Pereira (A Gonzalez 46), Lodeiro (Jonathan Rodriguez 46), Stuani, Rolan (Lozano 73).

Sep 4 - Lisbon
Portugal 0
France 1 (Valbuena 85)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 39,853. **Ref:** Makkelie (Hol)
Portugal: Rui Patricio - Vieirinha (Cedric 61), Pepe, Ricardo Carvalho (Jose Fonte 27), Eliseu, Adrien Silva (Miguel Veloso 60), Danilo Pereira (Bernardo Silva 86), Joao Mario (Danny 79), Nani, Eder, Cristiano Ronaldo (Quaresma 67).
France: Lloris - Sagna, Varane, Koscielny, Evra, Sissoko (Valbuena 80), Cabaye (Schneiderlin 46), Matuidi, Pogba, Benzema (Martial 74), Fekir (Griezmann 14; Giroud 88).

Sep 4 - Washington DC
United States 2 (Altidore 59, 68)
Peru 1 (Chavez 20)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 28,896. **Ref:** Chacon (Mex)
United States: Guzan - Orozco (Cameron 46), Gonzalez (Alvarado 46), Brooks (Besler 63), Ream, Yedlin, Jones (Williams 72), Bedoya (Diskerud 46), Zardes, Altidore, Wood (Johannsson 72).
Peru: Gallese - Zambrano, Vargas, Cueva (Flores 82), Farfan, Lobaton (Yotun 72), Advincula, Carrillo (Hurtado 64), Ballon (Tapia 64), Ascues, Chavez (Bulos 82).

Sep 4 - Puerto Ordaz
Venezuela 0
Honduras 3 (Andino 55, Castillo 73, Izaguirre pen 85)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 3,000. **Ref:** Buitrago (Col)
Venezuela: Baroja - Rosales, Vizcarrondo, Tunez (A Gonzalez 90), Cichero, Rincon (Signorelli 78), Seijas (C Gonzalez 68), Guerra (Arango 46), Vargas (M Rondon 61), Martinez (Fedor 69), S Rondon.
Honduras: Lopez - Izaguirre (Oseguera 90+2), Velasquez, Figueroa, Beckeles, Acosta, O Garcia (Hernandez 80), A Mejia (Garrido 78), J Mejia (Discua 65), Andino (Mendez 87), Bengtson (Castillo 71).

Saturday, September 5

Sep 5 - Santiago
Chile 3 (Gutierrez 7, 64, A Sanchez 82)
Paraguay 2 (Fabbro 51, Jorge Benitez 53)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 25,815. **Ref:** Vigliano (Arg)
Chile: Herrera - Isla, G Medel, Jara, Mena, Diaz, Gutierrez, Fernandez, Fernandes (Henriquez 57), Valdivia, A Sanchez.
Paraguay: A Silva - Samudio, Gomez, Moreira (Patino 60), B Valdez, Perez (Mencia 65), Aranda, N Ortigoza (Rojas 86), O Romero (Dominguez 46), Fabbro (Almiron 81), J Ortigoza (Jorge Benitez 46).

Sep 5 - Harrison, USA
Costa Rica 0
Brazil 1 (Hulk 9)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 19,600. **Ref:** Bourdeau (Can)
Costa Rica: Pemberton - Duarte, Acosta, Gonzalez, Gamboa (Myrie 89), Borges, Tejeda (Guzman 76), Venegas (Vega 90), B Ruiz (Colindres 79), Urena (Campbell 60), Matarrita.
Brazil: Marcelo Grohe - Danilo, Miranda, David Luiz, Marcelo, Luiz Gustavo (Rafinha 81), Fernandinho (Elias 73), Willian (Lucas Moura 77), Douglas Costa (Neymar 81), Lucas Lima (Philippe Coutinho 66), Hulk (Kaka 66).

Sep 5 - Libreville
Gabon 4 (Evouna 29, 67, Mbingui 61, Aubameyang 70)
Sudan 0
HT: 1-0

Monday, September 7

Sep 7 - Bordeaux
France 2 (Matuidi 9, 25)
Serbia 1 (A Mitrovic 39)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 42,000. **Ref:** Soares Dias (Por)
France: Lloris - Sagna (Debuchy 46), Varane, Mangala, Tremoulinas, Pogba, Schneiderlin, Matuidi (Kondogbia 46), Valbuena (Martial 76), Giroud (Benzema 62), Griezmann (Sissoko 90).
Serbia: P Rajkovic - Tomovic, Ivanovic, Spajic (Kosanovic 90), Obradovic, Gudelj (Ljajic 56), Matic, Fejsa (Petrovic 82), L Markovic (Z Tosic 58), A Mitrovic (Skuletic 76), Tadic (Kostic 56).

Sep 7 - Yangon
Myanmar 1 (Thiha Zaw 62)
New Zealand 1 (Smeltz pen 43)
HT: 0-1
New Zealand: Marinovic - Barbarouses (Raniga 72; Payne 77), Tzimopoulos, Reid, Boxall, Doyle (Higgins 84), McGlinchey, Tuiloma (Lewis 56), Rojas (Dyer 84), Smeltz, Brockie (Rufer 72).

Tuesday, September 8

Sep 8 - Harrison, USA
Colombia 1 (Bacca 37)
Peru 1 (Farfan pen 88)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 24,867. **Ref:** Penso (USA)
Colombia: Ospina - S Arias, Murillo, C Zapata (Alvarez 66), Fabra, Sanchez, Torres (Cardona 46), Cuellar (Balanta 46), Rodriguez (F Castillo 59), Gutierrez (Roa 73), Bacca (Martinez 59).
Peru: Gallese - Advincula (Requena 70), Zambrano (Ramos 74), Ascues, Vargas, Tapia (Ballon 72), Lobaton (Yotun 46), Carrillo (Sanchez 60), Cueva, Farfan, Bulos (Hurtado 60).

Sep 8 - San Jose
Costa Rica 1 (B Ruiz 7)
Uruguay 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 22,000. **Ref:** Delgadillo (Mex)
Costa Rica: Alvarado - Gamboa (Myrie 58), Acosta, Gonzalez, Duarte (Diaz 46), Matarrita (Francis 58), Tejeda (A Rodriguez 63), Borges (Guzman 80), Venegas (Urena 70), B Ruiz, Campbell.
Uruguay: M Silva - Corujo, Gimenez, Godin, Caceres, Arevalo (A Pereira 78), Sanchez (De Arrascaeta 68), Mayada (Stuani 46), A Gonzalez (Nandez 36), Jonathan Rodriguez (Santos 61), Rolan (Lozano 36).

Sep 8 - Quito
Ecuador 2 (Velasquez og 13, M Bolanos 35)
Honduras 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 6,000. **Ref:** Machado (Col)
Ecuador: Dominguez - Paredes (Ibarra 68), A Mina (Erazo 46), Achilier, W Ayovi, Noboa, Castillo (Gruezo 61), A Valencia, Arroyo (Cazares 61), M Bolanos, Martinez (Angulo 73).
Honduras: Valladares - Beckeles, Johnny Palacios, Velasquez (H Figueroa 46), M Figueroa, Izaguirre (Oseguera 46), Garrido, Mendez (Acosta 46), Quioto (Andino 64), Discua (O Garcia 58), J Mejia (Bengtson 56).

Sep 8 - Arlington, USA
Mexico 2 (J Hernandez pen 19, H Herrera 70)
Argentina 2 (Aguero 85, Messi 89)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 82,559. **Ref:** Salazar (USA)
Mexico: Munoz - Reyes, Marquez (Alanis 86), Moreno, Layun, I Jimenez, Guardado, Vazquez (Torres Nilo 66), H Herrera (Duenas 82), J Hernandez (Vela 77), R Jimenez.
Argentina: Guzman - Roncaglia, Demichelis (Kranevitter 76), Otamendi, Rojo (Mas 71), Gago (Pereyra 76), Mascherano, Banega, Messi, Tevez (Aguero 76), Correa (Lavezzi 76).

Sep 8 - Port Harcourt
Nigeria 2 (Musa pen 12, Simon 81)
Niger 0
HT: 1-0
Nigeria: Ikeme (Ezenwa 80) - Oboabona, Omeruo, Kwambe (Troost-Ekong 80), Obiora, Ibrahim, Ujah (Emenike 54), Akas, Igbonu (Yaro 61), Usman (Aggrey 46), Musa (Simon 61).

Sep 8 - Johannesburg
South Africa 1 (Makola 78)
Senegal 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 8,000. **Ref:** Otogo-Castane (Gab)
South Africa: Khune - Nhlapho, Ngcongca, Daniels, Mashaba, Makola, Jali, Zungu, Claasen (Shongwe 39), Vilakazi (Serero 66), Gabuza (Rantie 85).
Senegal: K N'Diaye (Gomis 53) - Mbodj (Koulibaly 65), A N'Diaye, Toure, Cissokho, M'Bengue, Konate (Souare 46), Mane, Badji, Sakho (Sane 63), Diagne (C N'Doye 79).

Sep 8 - Foxborough
United States 1 (Williams 90+1)
Brazil 4 (Hulk 9, Neymar pen 51, 67, Rafinha 64)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 29,308. **Ref:** Aguilar (ESv)
United States: Guzan - Orozco, Alvarado, Cameron (Spector 73), Ream, Bradley (Johannsson 79), Jones (Diskerud 72), Yedlin, Bedoya (Williams 36), Zardes (Wood 46), Altidore (Morris 57).
Brazil: Marcelo Grohe - Fabinho, Miranda (Marquinhos 22), David Luiz, Marcelo, Luiz Gustavo (Fernandinho 65), Elias, Willian (Neymar 46), Lucas Lima (Lucas Moura 63), Douglas Costa (Rafinha 63), Hulk (Roberto Firmino 46).

Sep 8 - Puerto Ordaz
Venezuela 1 (S Rondon 90+3)
Panama 1 (Blackburn 2)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 2,000. **Ref:** Ponton (Col)
Venezuela: Baroja - Vizcarrondo, Tunez, Cichero, Rosales (Carabali 80), Rincon, Guerra (C Gonzalez 74), A Gonzalez (Suarez 59), Seijas (Arango 74), S Rondon, Santos (Falcon 31).
Sent off: Carabali 90.
Panama: Mejia - Parris, Machado, L Henriquez, R Torres, Gomez, Godoy (Macea 24; Escobar 80), Quintero, Cooper, Blackburn (Addles 26; Calderon 90+6), B Perez (Buitrago 77).
Sent off: Mejia 90+4.

Sep 8 - Lusaka
Zambia 1 (Kalaba 22)
Gabon 1 (Bitseki Moto pen 79)
HT: 1-0

Saturday, September 12

Sep12 - Kigali
Rwanda 0
Gabon 1 (Avebe 36)
HT: 0-1

Club football

AFRICA

CAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Group A

Jun 28: Smouha (Egy) 3 Moghreb Tetouan (Mor) 2; TP Mazembe (DRC) 0 Al Hilal (Sud) 0.
Jul 12: Al Hilal 2 Smouha 0; Moghreb Tetouan 0 TP Mazembe 0.
Jul 24: Smouha 0 TP Mazembe 2.
Jul 26: Moghreb Tetouan 1 Al Hilal 1.
Aug 7: Al Hilal 0 Moghreb Tetouan 1.
Aug 8: TP Mazembe 1 Smouha 0.
Aug 23: Al Hilal 1 TP Mazembe 0; Moghreb Tetouan 2 Smouha 1.
Sep 12: Smouha 1 Al Hilal 1; TP Mazembe 5 Moghreb Tetouan 0.

CAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP A – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
TP Maz'be (Q)	6	3	2	1	8	1	11
Al Hilal (Q)	6	2	3	1	5	3	9
Moghreb Tet'n	6	2	2	2	6	10	8
Smouha	6	1	1	4	5	10	4

Group B

Jun 26: Al Merreikh (Sud) 2 MC El Eulma (Alg) 0.
Jun 27: ES Setif (Alg) 1 USM Alger (Alg) 2.
Jul 10: USM Alger 1 Al Merreikh 0.
Jul 11: MC El Eulma 0 ES Setif 1.
Jul 24: USM Alger 2 MC El Eulma 1.
Jul 25: ES Setif 1 Al Merreikh 1.
Aug 7: MC El Eulma 0 USM Alger 1.
Aug 9: Al Merreikh 2 ES Setif 0.
Aug 21: USM Alger 3 ES Setif 0.
Aug 22: MC El Eulma 2 Al Merreikh 3.
Sep 11: Al Merreikh 1 USM Alger 0; ES Setif 2 MC El Eulma 2.

CAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP B – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
USM Alger (Q)	6	5	0	1	9	3	15
Al Merreikh (Q)	6	4	1	1	9	4	13
ES Setif	6	1	2	3	5	10	5
MC El Eulma	6	0	1	5	5	11	1

● *Top 2 in both groups qualified for semi-finals*

CONFEDERATION CUP

Group A

Jun 26: Etoile Sahel (Tun) 1 Stade Malien (Mli) 0.
Jun 28: Al Ahly (Egy) 3 Esperance (Tun) 0.
Jul 11: Esperance 0 Etoile Sahel 1.
Jul 12: Stade Malien 0 Al Ahly 0.
Jul 25: Al Ahly 1 Etoile Sahel 0; Esperance 1 Stade Malien 2.
Aug 8: Etoile Sahel 1 Al Ahly 0.
Aug 9: Stade Malien 0 Esperance 1.
Aug 22: Esperance 0 Al Ahly 1.
Aug 23: Stade Malien 1 Etoile Sahel 1.
Sep 12: Al Ahly 1 Std Malien 0; Etoile S 2 Esp'nce 1.

CONFEDERATION CUP – GROUP A – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Al Ahly (Q)	6	4	1	1	6	1	13
Etoile Sahel (Q)	6	4	1	1	6	3	13
Stade Malien	6	1	2	3	3	5	5
Esperance	6	1	0	5	3	9	3

Group B

Jun 27: AC Leopards (Con) 0 Orlando Pirates (SAf) 1; Zamalek (Egy) 1 CS Sfaxien (Tun) 0.
Jul 10: CS Sfaxien 1 AC Leopards 1.
Jul 11: Orlando Pirates 1 Zamalek 2.
Jul 26: CS Sfaxien 0 Orlando Pirates 1; Zamalek 2 AC Leopards 0.
Aug 8: Orlando Pirates 2 CS Sfaxien 0.
Aug 9: AC Leopards 1 Zamalek 0.
Aug 22: Orlando Pirates 2 AC Leopards 0.
Aug 23: CS Sfaxien 1 Zamalek 3.
Sep 13: AC Leopards 0 CS Sfaxien 0; Zamalek 4 Orlando Pirates 1.

CONFEDERATION CUP – GROUP B – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Zamalek (Q)	6	5	0	1	12	4	15
Orlando P (Q)	6	4	0	2	8	6	12
AC Leopards	6	1	2	3	2	6	5
CS Sfaxien	6	0	2	4	2	8	2

● *Top 2 in both groups qualified for semi-finals*

CAMEROON

2015 – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Coton Sp't[1] (C)	34	18	11	5	43	25	62
Union Douala	34	17	10	7	42	24	61
New Star	34	16	10	8	41	23	58
Botafogo	34	16	10	8	34	24	58
APEJES Acad	34	13	10	11	33	24	49
Panthere Nde	34	10	19	5	32	27	49
Unisport	34	12	12	10	33	28	48
YOSA	34	13	9	12	34	33	48
Dragon	34	13	7	14	30	33	46
Bamboutos	34	10	14	10	29	31	44
Lion Blesse	34	10	12	12	29	30	42
UMS Loum	34	9	15	10	28	30	42
Les Astres	34	11	8	15	35	36	41
Cosmos Bafia	34	11	8	15	21	28	41
Fovu Baham	34	9	13	12	32	36	40
Canon Y'de (R)	34	8	14	12	33	43	38
Njalla Quan (R)	34	8	7	19	18	37	31
Tonnerre[2] (R)	34	3	9	22	13	48	15

[1]3pts deducted for an attack on the referee that led to the abandonment of a home game
[2]3pts deducted for failing to show up for a game

GHANA

2015 – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ashanti G (C)	30	15	7	8	35	26	52
Aduana Stars	30	14	4	12	23	25	46
Berekum C	30	13	5	12	43	36	44
Hearts of Oak	30	11	10	9	35	29	43
Liberty Prof's	30	12	7	11	28	28	43
Asante Ko'ko[1]	30	12	9	9	36	32	42
Inter Allies	30	11	9	10	28	22	42
New Edubiase	30	11	9	10	38	41	42
Hasaacas	30	12	6	12	33	35	42
Wa All Stars	30	12	5	13	27	24	41
Bechem	30	12	5	13	33	34	41
Medeama	30	10	11	9	35	29	41
WAFA	30	11	8	11	27	27	41
Heart Lions (R)	30	11	7	12	36	38	40
G Olympics (R)	30	11	7	12	33	34	40
BA Utd (R)	30	4	7	19	21	54	19

[1]3pts (and 3 goals) deducted for fielding an ineligible player

GUINEA-BISSAU

2015 – FINAL[1]	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
SB Benfica (C)	26	17	7	2	69	20	58
Sporting GB	26	17	5	4	36	14	56
Lagartos	25	13	5	7	31	22	44
SC Bafata	25	12	6	7	42	24	42
Os Balantas	26	10	9	7	24	18	39
Canchungo	25	9	9	7	35	27	36
Nuno Tristao	26	9	9	8	36	33	36
Tigres	25	9	7	9	23	31	34
UDIB	25	7	8	10	22	26	29
Portos	25	7	6	12	26	31	27
Cuntum	25	7	5	13	23	37	26
Bijagos (R)	25	6	4	15	24	37	22
EN Bissau (R)	25	5	6	14	15	45	21
EN Bolama (R)	25	4	4	17	22	63	16

[1]5 final-day games were not played

MALI

2014-15 – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Std Malien (C)	22	16	2	4	35	12	50
Onze Createurs	22	11	11	0	36	13	44
USFAS	22	12	2	8	28	24	38
Bakaridjan	22	9	9	4	24	17	36
Real Bamako	22	9	9	4	28	14	36
Duguwolofila	22	8	8	6	21	17	32
Police	22	6	9	7	23	24	27
Nianan	22	8	3	11	22	27	27
Mamahira	22	5	7	10	18	32	22
ASOM	22	4	6	12	11	29	18
AS Bamako	22	4	3	15	13	26	15
Sabana	22	2	7	13	13	37	13

AS Avenir, Centre Salif Keita, CO Bamako & Djoliba were all disqualified mid-season; all results annulled

ASIA

AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Quarter-finals

1st legs - Aug 25/26; 2nd legs - Sep15/16
Al Hilal (Sau) v Lekhwiya (Qat) 4-1, 2-2 (agg 6-3)
Jeonbuk Motors (SKo) v Gamba Osaka (Jap) 0-0, 2-3 (agg 2-3)
Kashiwa Reysol (Jap) v Guangzhou Evergrande (Chn) 1-3, 1-1 (agg 2-4)
Naft Tehran (Irn) v Al Ahli (UAE) 0-1, 1-2 (agg 1-3)

AFC CUP

Quarter-finals

1st legs - Aug 25/26; 2nd legs - Sep15/16
Istiklol (Taj) v Pahang (Mly) 4-0, 1-3 (agg 5-3)
Johor Darul Ta'zim (Mly) v South China (HK) 1-1, 3-1 (agg 4-2)
Kuwait SC (Kuw) v Kitchee (HK) 6-0, 1-1 (agg 7-1)
Qadsia SC (Kuw) v Al Jaish (Syr) 3-0, 0-2 (agg 3-2)

BHUTAN

2015 – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Terton (C)	10	6	4	0	29	10	22
Thimphu FC	10	6	3	1	22	10	21
Thimphu City	10	6	2	2	26	11	20
Ugyen Acad	10	4	2	4	25	19	14
B'tan Clearing	10	1	1	8	11	37	4
Paro United	10	1	0	9	8	34	3

VIETNAM

2015 – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Binh Duong (C)	26	16	4	6	57	33	52
Hanoi T&T	26	13	7	6	51	30	46
Thanh Hoa	26	13	5	8	42	44	44
T Quang Ninh	26	13	3	10	39	31	42
Sanna K Hoa	26	12	6	8	35	35	42
Hai Phong	26	11	8	7	31	28	41
Song Lam NA	26	10	7	9	36	33	37
Quang Nam	26	9	9	8	49	39	36
Da Nang	26	10	6	10	42	32	36
Dong Tam LA	26	8	9	9	39	42	33
Can Tho	26	6	7	13	32	52	25
Dong Thap	26	7	3	16	34	54	24
Hoang Anh GL	26	6	6	14	33	50	24
Dong Nai (R)	26	5	6	15	35	52	21

SOUTH AMERICA

SUDAMERICANA CUP

2nd round

1st legs - Aug18-27; 2nd legs - Aug 25-Sep17
Arsenal (Arg) v Independiente (Arg) 1-1, 0-1 (agg 1-2)
Bahia (Bra) v Sport Recife (Bra) 1-0, 1-4 (agg 2-4)
Belgrano (Arg) v Lanus (Arg) 1-1, 1-5 (agg 2-6)
Brasilia (Bra) v Goias (Bra) 0-0, 2-0 (agg 2-0)
Defensor Sporting (Uru) v Universitario (Per) 3-0, 1-0 (agg 4-0)
Emelec (Ecu) v Juventud (Uru) 0-0, 0-0 (agg 0-0, Emelec 3-2 on pens)
Joinville (Bra) v Atletico Paranaense (Bra) 0-2, 0-1 (agg 0-3)
La Guaira (Ven) v Sportivo Luqueno (Par) 1-1, 0-4 (agg 1-5)
LDU Quito (Ecu) v Nacional (Par) 1-0, 1-0 (agg 2-0)
Nacional (Uru) v Santa Fe (Col) 0-2, 1-0 (agg 1-2)
Olimpia (Par) v Aguilas Doradas (Col) 1-1, 2-1 (agg 3-2)
Ponte Preta (Bra) v Chapecoense (Bra) 1-1, 0-3 (agg 1-4)
Tigre (Arg) v Huracan (Arg) 2-5, 0-1 (agg 2-6)
Tolima (Col) v Junior (Col) 0-1, 2-0 (agg 2-1)
Universidad Catolica (Chl) v Libertad (Par) 2-3, 0-1 (agg 2-4)

Bye to 3rd round: *River Plate (Arg; holders)*

CONCACAF

CANADA

2015 Championship Final

1st leg - Aug12; 2nd leg - Aug 26
Montreal Impact v Vancouver Whitecaps 2-2, 0-2 (agg 2-4)

KEY TO TABLES
(C) = champions (R) = relegated
(Q) = qualified for next stage

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UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE 2015-2016

ARSENAL (Eng)

GOALKEEPERS

33	Petr **CECH** (CzR)	(33) 20.05.82
44	Deyan **ILIEV** (Bul)	(20) 25.02.95
49	Matt **MACEY**	(21) 09.09.94
13	David **OSPINA** (Col)	(27) 31.08.88

DEFENDERS

24	Hector **BELLERIN** (Spa)	(20) 19.03.95
21	Calum **CHAMBERS**	(20) 20.01.95
2	Mathieu **DEBUCHY** (Fra)	(30) 28.07.85
5	**GABRIEL** (Bra)	(24) 26.11.90
3	Kieran **GIBBS**	(25) 26.09.89
6	Laurent **KOSCIELNY** (Fra)	(30) 10.09.85
4	Per **MERTESACKER** (Ger)	(30) 29.09.84
18	Nacho **MONREAL** (Spa)	(29) 26.02.86
51	Tafari **MOORE**	(18) 05.07.97
52	Stefan **O'CONNOR**	(18) 23.01.97

MIDFIELDERS

8	Mikel **ARTETA** (Spa)	(33) 26.03.82
19	Santi **CAZORLA** (Spa)	(30) 13.12.84
34	Francis **COQUELIN** (Fra)	(24) 13.05.91
20	Mathieu **FLAMINI** (Fra)	(31) 07.03.84
47	Glen **KAMARA** (Fin)	(19) 28.10.95
15	Alex **OXLADE-CHAMBERLAIN**	(22) 15.08.93
11	Mesut **OZIL** (Ger)	(26) 15.10.88
16	Aaron **RAMSEY** (Wal)	(24) 26.12.90
54	Jeff **REINE-ADELAIDE** (Fra)	(17) 17.01.98
7	Tomas **ROSICKY** (CzR)	(34) 04.10.80
10	Jack **WILSHERE**	(23) 01.01.92

FORWARDS

28	Joel **CAMPBELL** (CR)	(23) 26.06.92
12	Olivier **GIROUD** (Fra)	(28) 30.09.86
45	Alex **IWOBI**	(19) 03.05.96
17	Alexis **SANCHEZ** (Chl)	(26) 19.12.88
14	Theo **WALCOTT**	(26) 16.03.89
23	Danny **WELBECK**	(24) 26.11.90
59	Chris **WILLOCK**	(17) 31.01.98

MANAGER

Arsene **WENGER** (Fra)		(65) 22.10.49

ASTANA (Kaz)

GOALKEEPERS

1	Nenad **ERIC**	(33) 26.05.82
40	Mikhail **GOLUBNICHI**	(20) 31.01.95
85	Vladimir **LOGINOVSKI**	(29) 08.10.85

DEFENDERS

2	Yeldos **AKHMETOV**	(25) 01.06.90
5	Marin **ANICIC** (Bos)	(26) 17.08.89
33	Branko **ILIC** (Sln)	(32) 06.02.83
12	Igor **PIKALKIN**	(23) 19.03.92
44	Evgeni **POSTNIKOV**	(29) 16.04.86

MIDFIELDERS

15	Abzal **BEYSEBEKOV**	(22) 30.11.92
88	Roger **CANAS** (Col)	(25) 27.03.90
24	Denys **DEDECHKO** (Ukr)	(28) 02.07.87
10	Foxi **KETHEVOAMA** (CAR)	(29) 30.05.86
18	Rinat **KHAIRULLIN**	(21) 19.02.94
20	Zhakyp **KOZHAMBERDY**	(23) 26.02.92
6	Nemanja **MAKSIMOVIC** (Ser)	(20) 26.01.95
11	Serikzhan **MUZHIKOV**	(26) 17.06.89
77	Dmitri **SHOMKO**	(25) 19.03.90
8	Georgi **ZHUKOV**	(20) 19.11.94

FORWARDS

22	Baurzhan **DZHOLCHIYEV**	(25) 08.05.90
89	Junior **KABANANGA** (DRC)	(26) 04.04.89
17	Tanat **NUSERBAYEV**	(28) 01.01.87
9	Aleksei **SCHETKIN**	(24) 21.05.91
23	Patrick **TWUMASI** (Gha)	(21) 09.05.94

COACH

Stanimir **STOILOV** (Bul)		(48) 13.02.67

ATLETICO MADRID (Spa)

GOALKEEPERS

25	Bernabe **BARRAGAN**	(22) 18.02.93
1	Miguel Angel **MOYA** (Spa)	(31) 02.04.84
13	Jan **OBLAK** (Slk)	(22) 07.01.93

DEFENDERS

28	**CANETE**	(20) 22.04.95
18	Jesus **GAMEZ**	(30) 10.04.85
24	Jose Maria **GIMENEZ** (Uru)	(20) 20.01.95
2	Diego **GODIN** (Uru)	(29) 16.02.86
19	Lucas **HERNANDEZ** (Fra)	(19) 14.02.96
20	**JUANFRAN**	(30) 09.01.85
3	Filipe **LUIS** (Bra)	(30) 09.08.85
27	Nacho **MONSALVE**	(21) 27.04.94
40	Alvaro **MUGURUZA**	(18) 10.05.97
15	Stefan **SAVIC** (Mne)	(24) 08.01.91
4	Guilherme **SIQUEIRA**	(29) 28.04.86

MIDFIELDERS

16	Angel **CORREA** (Arg)	(20) 09.03.95
29	**BENJAMIN** (Gha)	(21) 04.01.94
14	**GABI**	(32) 10.07.83
7	Antoine **GRIEZMANN** (Fra)	(24) 21.03.91
6	**KOKE**	(23) 08.01.92
39	Juan **MORENO**	(18) 11.05.97
17	Saul **NIGUEZ**	(20) 21.11.94
22	Thomas **PARTEY** (Gha)	(22) 13.06.93
5	**TIAGO** (Por)	(34) 02.05.81
10	Oliver **TORRES**	(20) 10.11.94
26	**XU** Xin (Chn)	(21) 19.04.94

FORWARDS

21	Yannick **FERREIRA-CARRASCO** (Blg)	(22) 04.09.93
11	Jackson **MARTINEZ** (Col)	(28) 03.10.86
9	Fernando **TORRES**	(31) 20.03.84
23	Luciano **VIETTO** (Arg)	(21) 05.12.93
32	Samuel **VILLA**	(20) 16.09.94

COACH

Diego **SIMEONE** (Arg)		(45) 28.04.70

BARCELONA (Spa)

GOALKEEPERS

13	Claudio **BRAVO** (Chl)	(32) 13.04.83
25	Jordi **MASIP**	(26) 03.01.89
31	Jose **AURELIO** Suarez	(19) 18.12.95
1	Marc-Andre **TER STEGEN** (Ger)	(23) 30.04.92

DEFENDERS

21	**ADRIANO** (Bra)	(30) 26.10.84
18	Jordi **ALBA**	(26) 21.03.89
6	Dani **ALVES** (Bra)	(32) 06.05.83
15	Marc **BARTRA**	(24) 15.01.91
2	**DOUGLAS** (Bra)	(25) 06.08.90
30	Alejandro **GRIMALDO**	(19) 20.09.95
14	Javier **MASCHERANO** (Arg)	(31) 08.06.84
24	Jeremy **MATHIEU** (Fra)	(31) 29.10.83
3	Gerard **PIQUE**	(28) 02.02.87
23	Thomas **VERMAELEN** (Blg)	(29) 14.11.85

MIDFIELDERS

29	David **BABUNSKI** (Mac)	(21) 01.03.94
5	Sergio **BUSQUETS**	(27) 16.07.88
27	Juan **CAMARA**	(21) 13.02.94
28	Gerard **GUMBAU**	(20) 18.12.94
8	Andres **INIESTA**	(31) 11.05.84
12	**RAFINHA**	(22) 12.02.93
4	Ivan **RAKITIC** (Cro)	(27) 10.03.88
20	Sergi **ROBERTO**	(23) 07.02.92
26	Sergi **SAMPER**	(20) 20.01.95

FORWARDS

17	Munir **EL HADDADI**	(20) 01.09.95
10	Lionel **MESSI** (Arg)	(28) 24.06.87
11	**NEYMAR** (Bra)	(23) 05.02.92
19	Sandro **RAMIREZ**	(20) 09.07.95
9	Luis **SUAREZ** (Uru)	(28) 24.01.87

COACH

Luis **ENRIQUE**		(45) 08.05.70

BOR M'GLADBACH (Ger)

GOALKEEPERS

33	Christofer **HEIMEROTH**	(34) 01.08.81
41	Martin **KOMPALLA**	(23) 26.08.92
21	Tobias **SIPPEL**	(27) 22.03.88
1	Yann **SOMMER** (Swi)	(26) 17.12.88

DEFENDERS

4	Roel **BROUWERS** (Hol)	(33) 28.11.81
3	Andreas **CHRISTENSEN** (Den)	(19) 10.04.96
15	Alvaro **DOMINGUEZ** (Spa)	(26) 16.05.89
30	Nico **ELVEDI** (Swi)	(18) 30.09.96
24	Tony **JANTSCHKE**	(25) 07.04.90
19	Fabian **JOHNSON**	(27) 11.12.87
27	Julian **KORB**	(23) 21.03.92
18	Marvin **SCHULZ**	(20) 15.01.95
39	Martin **STRANZL** (Aut)	(35) 16.06.80
17	Oscar **WENDT** (Swe)	(29) 24.10.85

MIDFIELDERS

28	Andre **HAHN**	(25) 13.08.90
10	Thorgan **HAZARD** (Blg)	(22) 29.03.93
6	Havard **NORDTVEIT** (Nor)	(25) 21.06.90
14	Nico **SCHULZ**	(22) 01.04.93
13	Lars **STINDL**	(27) 26.08.88
16	Ibrahima **TRAORE** (GuB)	(27) 21.04.88
34	Granit **XHAKA** (Swi)	(22) 27.09.92

FORWARDS

9	Josip **DRMIC** (Swi)	(23) 08.08.92
7	Patrick **HERRMANN**	(24) 12.02.91
31	Branimir **HRGOTA** (Swe)	(22) 12.01.93
11	**RAFFAEL** (Bra)	(30) 28.03.85

INTERIM COACH

Andre **SCHUBERT**		(44) 24.07.71

CHELSEA (Eng)

GOALKEEPERS

1	Asmir **BEGOVIC** (Bos)	(28) 20.06.87
27	Jamal **BLACKMAN**	(21) 27.10.93
13	Thibaut **COURTOIS** (Blg)	(23) 11.05.92

DEFENDERS

28	Cesar **AZPILICUETA** (Spa)	(26) 28.08.89
24	Gary **CAHILL**	(29) 19.12.85
2	Branislav **IVANOVIC** (Ser)	(31) 22.02.84
6	Abdul **RAHMAN** (Gha)	(21) 02.07.94
26	John **TERRY**	(34) 07.12.80
5	Kurt **ZOUMA** (Fra)	(20) 27.10.94

MIDFIELDERS

4	Cesc **FABREGAS** (Spa)	(28) 04.05.87
10	Eden **HAZARD** (Blg)	(24) 07.01.91
16	**KENEDY** (Bra)	(19) 08.02.96
36	Ruben **LOFTUS-CHEEK**	(19) 23.01.96
21	Nemanja **MATIC** (Ser)	(27) 01.08.88
12	John Obi **MIKEL** (Nga)	(28) 22.04.87
8	**OSCAR** (Bra)	(24) 09.09.91
7	**RAMIRES** (Bra)	(28) 24.03.87
14	Bertrand **TRAORE** (BuF)	(20) 06.09.95
22	**WILLIAN** (Bra)	(27) 09.08.88

FORWARDS

19	Diego **COSTA** (Spa)	(26) 07.10.88
9	Radamel **FALCAO** (Col)	(29) 10.02.86
17	**PEDRO** (Spa)	(28) 28.07.87
18	Loic **REMY** (Fra)	(28) 02.01.87

MANAGER

Jose **MOURINHO** (Por)		(52) 26.01.63

CSKA MOSCOW (Rus)

GOALKEEPERS

35	Igor **AKINFEEV**	(29) 08.04.86
1	Sergei **CHEPCHUGOV**	(30) 15.07.85
45	Ilya **POMAZUN**	(19) 16.08.96

DEFENDERS

6	Aleksei **BEREZUTSKI**	(33) 20.06.82
24	Vasili **BEREZUTSKI**	(33) 20.06.82
91	Nikita **CHERNOV**	(19) 14.01.96
2	Mario **FERNANDES** (Bra)	(24) 28.06.91
4	Sergei **IGNASHEVICH**	(36) 14.07.79
14	Kirill **NABABKIN**	(29) 08.09.86
42	Georgi **SCHENNIKOV**	(24) 27.04.91
5	Viktor **VASIN**	(26) 06.10.88

MIDFIELDERS

19	Aleksandrs **CAUNA** (Lat)	(27) 19.01.88
10	Alan **DZAGOEV**	(25) 17.06.90
25	Roman **EREMENKO** (Fin)	(28) 19.03.87
60	Aleksandr **GOLOVIN**	(19) 30.05.96
23	Georgi **MILANOV** (Bul)	(23) 19.02.92
66	Bibras **NATCHO** (Isr)	(27) 18.02.88
7	Zoran **TOSIC** (Ser)	(28) 28.04.87
3	Pontus **WERNBLOOM** (Swe)	(29) 25.06.86

FORWARDS

88	Seydou **DOUMBIA** (IvC)	(27) 31.12.87
43	Aleksandr **MAKAROV**	(19) 24.04.96
18	Ahmed **MUSA** (Nga)	(22) 14.10.92
8	Kirill **PANCHENKO**	(25) 19.10.89

COACH

Leonid **SLUTSKI**		(44) 04.05.71

DINAMO ZAGREB (Cro)

GOALKEEPERS

34	**EDUARDO** (Por)	(32) 19.09.82
1	Antonijo **JEZINA**	(26) 05.06.89
33	Marko **MIKULIC**	(21) 30.01.94

DEFENDERS

26	Filip **BENKOVIC**	(18) 13.07.97
77	Alexandru **MATEL** (Rom)	(25) 17.10.89
6	Ivo **PINTO** (Por)	(25) 07.01.90
23	Gordon **SCHILDENFELD**	(30) 18.03.85
22	Leonardo **SIGALI** (Arg)	(28) 29.05.87
87	Jeremy **TARAVEL** (Fra)	(28) 17.04.87

MIDFIELDERS

16	Arijan **ADEMI**	(24) 29.05.91
8	Domagoj **ANTOLIC**	(25) 30.06.90
24	Ante **CORIC**	(18) 14.04.97
14	Amer **GOJAK** (Bos)	(18) 13.02.97
10	Paulo **MACHADO** (Por)	(29) 31.03.86
3	Mario **MUSA**	(25) 06.07.90
18	Domagoj **PAVICIC**	(21) 09.03.94
19	Josip **PIVARIC**	(26) 30.01.89
30	Marko **ROG**	(20) 19.07.95
13	Goncalo **SANTOS** (Por)	(28) 15.11.86
4	Damir **SOVSIC**	(25) 05.02.90

FORWARDS

17	Endri **CEKICI** (Alb)	(18) 23.11.96
11	Junior **FERNANDES** (Chl)	(27) 10.04.88
9	Angelo **HENRIQUEZ** (Chl)	(21) 13.04.94
15	Armin **HODZIC** (Bos)	(20) 17.11.94
20	Marko **PJACA**	(20) 06.05.95
2	El Arbi Hilal **SOUDANI** (Alg)	(27) 25.11.87

COACH

Zoran **MAMIC**		(43) 30.09.71

BATE (Bls)

GOALKEEPERS

16	Sergei **CHERNIK**	(27) 20.07.88
35	Anton **CHICHKAN**	(20) 10.07.95
48	Denis **SCHERBITSKI**	(19) 14.04.96
34	Artem **SOROKO**	(23) 01.04.92

DEFENDERS

27	Dmitri **BAIDUK**	(19) 03.08.96
4	Kaspars **DUBRA** (Lat)	(24) 20.12.90
3	Vitali **GAIDUCHIK**	(26) 12.07.89
25	Filip **MLADENOVIC** (Ser)	(24) 15.08.91
33	Denis **POLYAKOV**	(24) 17.04.91
28	Maksim **ROVBUT**	(19) 24.05.96

MIDFIELDERS

9	Ilya **ALEKSIEVICH**	(24) 10.02.91
55	Dmitri **BAGA**	(25) 04.01.90
29	Pavel **BOGUSH**	(19) 24.01.96
81	Aleksandr **HLEB**	(34) 01.05.81
7	Aleksandr **KARNITSKI**	(26) 14.02.89
2	Dmitri **LIKHTAROVICH**	(37) 01.03.78
19	Nemanja **MILUNOVIC** (Ser)	(26) 31.05.89
10	Nemanja **NIKOLIC** (Mne)	(27) 01.01.88
23	Edgar **OLEKHNOVICH**	(28) 17.05.87
17	Aleksei **RIOS**	(28) 14.05.87
22	Igor **STASEVICH**	(29) 21.10.85
8	Aleksandr **VOLODKO**	(29) 18.06.86
42	Maksim **VOLODKO**	(22) 10.11.92
5	Evgeni **YABLONSKI**	(20) 10.05.95
15	Maksim **ZHAVNERCHIK**	(30) 09.02.85

FORWARDS

44	Dmitri **ANTILEVSKI**	(18) 12.06.97
62	Mikhail **GORDEICHUK**	(25) 23.10.89
11	Aleksandar **JEVTIC** (Ser)	(30) 30.03.85
18	Dmitri **MOZOLEVSKI**	(30) 30.04.85
20	Vitali **RODIONOV**	(31) 11.12.83
13	Nikolai **SIGNEVICH**	(23) 20.02.92

COACH

	Aleksandr **ERMAKOVICH**	(40) 21.01.75

BAYER LEVERKUSEN (Ger)

GOALKEEPERS

25	Dario **KRESIC** (Cro)	(31) 11.01.84
1	Bernd **LENO**	(23) 04.03.92
22	David **YELLDELL** (USA)	(33) 01.10.81

DEFENDERS

17	Sebastian **BOENISCH** (Pol)	(28) 01.02.87
26	Giulio **DONATI** (Ita)	(25) 05.02.90
13	Roberto **HILBERT**	(30) 16.10.84
16	Tin **JEDVAJ** (Cro)	(19) 28.11.95
5	Kyriakos **PAPADOPOULOS** (Gre)	(23) 23.02.92
2	Andre **RAMALHO** (Bra)	(23) 16.02.92
4	Jonathan **TAH**	(19) 11.02.96
21	Omer **TOPRAK** (Tur)	(26) 21.07.89
18	**WENDELL** (Bra)	(22) 20.07.93

MIDFIELDERS

38	Karim **BELLARABI**	(25) 08.04.90
8	Lars **BENDER**	(26) 27.04.89
19	Julian **BRANDT**	(19) 02.05.96
10	Hakan **CALHANOGLU** (Tur)	(21) 08.02.94
37	Marlon **FREY**	(19) 24.03.96
44	Kevin **KAMPL** (Sln)	(24) 09.10.90
23	Christoph **KRAMER**	(24) 19.02.91
35	Vladlen **YURCHENKO** (Ukr)	(21) 22.01.94

FORWARDS

7	Javier **HERNANDEZ** (Mex)	(27) 01.06.88
11	Stefan **KIESSLING**	(31) 25.01.84
14	Admir **MEHMEDI** (Swi)	(24) 16.03.91
24	**RYU** Seung-woo (SKo)	(21) 17.12.93

COACH

	Roger **SCHMIDT**	(48) 13.03.67

BAYERN MUNICH (Ger)

GOALKEEPERS

33	Ivan **LUCIC** (Aut)	(20) 23.03.95
1	Manuel **NEUER**	(29) 27.03.86
22	Tom **STARKE**	(34) 18.03.81
26	Sven **ULREICH**	(27) 03.08.88

DEFENDERS

27	David **ALABA** (Aut)	(23) 24.06.92
28	Holger **BADSTUBER**	(26) 13.03.89
5	Medhi **BENATIA** (Mor)	(28) 17.04.87
18	Juan **BERNAT** (Spa)	(22) 01.03.93
17	Jerome **BOATENG**	(27) 03.09.88
15	Jan **KIRCHHOFF**	(24) 01.10.90
21	Philipp **LAHM**	(31) 11.11.83
38	Felix **POHL**	(18) 11.12.96
13	**RAFINHA** (Bra)	(30) 07.09.85

MIDFIELDERS

14	Xabi **ALONSO** (Spa)	(33) 25.11.81
11	Douglas **COSTA** (Bra)	(25) 14.09.90
30	Niklas **DORSCH**	(17) 15.01.98
16	Gianluca **GAUDINO**	(18) 11.11.96
19	Mario **GOTZE**	(23) 03.06.92
37	Julian **GREEN** (USA)	(20) 06.06.95
32	Joshua **KIMMICH**	(20) 08.02.95
8	Javi **MARTINEZ** (Spa)	(27) 02.09.88
7	Franck **RIBERY** (Fra)	(32) 07.04.83
20	Sebastian **RODE**	(24) 11.10.90
6	**THIAGO** Alcantara (Spa)	(24) 11.04.91
23	Arturo **VIDAL** (Chl)	(28) 22.05.87

FORWARDS

29	Kingsley **COMAN** (Fra)	(19) 13.06.96
9	Robert **LEWANDOWSKI** (Pol)	(27) 21.08.88
25	Thomas **MULLER**	(26) 13.09.89
10	Arjen **ROBBEN** (Hol)	(31) 23.01.84
36	Patrick **WEIHRAUCH**	(21) 03.03.94

COACH

	Pep **GUARDIOLA** (Spa)	(44) 18.01.71

BENFICA (Por)

GOALKEEPERS

12	Julio **CESAR** (Bra)	(36) 03.09.79
1	**EDERSON** (Bra)	(22) 17.08.93
13	Paulo **LOPES**	(37) 29.06.78
87	Miguel **SANTOS**	(20) 21.10.94

DEFENDERS

75	Alex **ALFAIATE**	(20) 17.08.95
34	Andre **ALMEIDA**	(25) 10.09.90
19	**ELISEU**	(31) 01.10.83
33	**JARDEL** (Bra)	(29) 29.03.86
14	Victor **LINDELOF** (Swe)	(21) 17.07.94
2	Lisandro **LOPEZ** (Arg)	(26) 01.09.89
4	**LUISAO** (Bra)	(34) 13.02.81
63	Joao **NUNES**	(19) 19.11.95
60	**REBOCHO**	(20) 23.01.95
50	Nelson **SEMEDO**	(21) 16.11.93
28	**SILVIO**	(27) 28.09.87

MIDFIELDERS

31	Victor **ANDRADE** (Bra)	(19) 30.09.95
39	Mehdi **CARCELA-GONZALEZ** (Mor)	(26) 01.07.89
24	Bryan **CRISTANTE** (Ita)	(20) 03.03.95
5	Ljubomir **FEJSA** (Ser)	(27) 14.08.88
10	Nicolas **GAITAN** (Arg)	(27) 23.02.88
7	Andreas **SAMARIS** (Gre)	(26) 13.06.89
40	Joao **TEIXEIRA**	(21) 06.02.94

FORWARDS

20	Goncalo **GUEDES**	(18) 29.11.96
9	Raul **JIMENEZ** (Mex)	(24) 05.05.91
17	**JONAS** (Bra)	(31) 01.04.84
11	Kostas **MITROGLOU** (Gre)	(27) 12.03.88
8	Bilal **OULD-CHIKH** (Hol)	(18) 28.07.97
21	**PIZZI**	(25) 06.10.89
38	Nuno **SANTOS**	(20) 13.02.95
77	Sancidino **SILVA**	(21) 05.03.94
23	Adel **TAARABT** (Mor)	(26) 24.05.89
30	**TALISCA** (Bra)	(21) 01.02.94

COACH

	Rui **VITORIA**	(45) 16.04.70

DYNAMO KIEV (Ukr)

GOALKEEPERS

23	Olexandr **RYBKA**	(28) 10.04.87
1	Olexandr **SHOVKOVSKIY**	(40) 02.01.75

DEFENDERS

5	**ANTUNES** (Por)	(28) 01.04.87
6	Aleksandar **DRAGOVIC** (Aut)	(24) 06.03.91
34	Yevhen **KHACHERIDI**	(28) 28.07.87
27	Yevhen **MAKARENKO**	(24) 21.05.91
9	Mykola **MOROZYUK**	(27) 17.01.88
2	Danilo **SILVA** (Bra)	(28) 24.11.86
24	Domagoj **VIDA** (Cro)	(26) 29.04.89

MIDFIELDERS

90	Younes **BELHANDA** (Mor)	(25) 25.02.90
29	Vitaliy **BUYALSKIY**	(22) 06.01.93
19	Denys **GARMASH**	(25) 19.04.90
25	Derlis **GONZALEZ** (Par)	(21) 20.03.94
20	Oleh **GUSEV**	(32) 25.04.83
21	Niko **KRANJCAR** (Cro)	(31) 13.08.84
88	Serhiy **MYAKUSHKO**	(22) 15.04.93
8	Radosav **PETROVIC** (Ser)	(26) 08.03.89
17	Serhiy **RYBALKA**	(25) 01.04.90
16	Serhiy **SYDORCHUK**	(24) 02.05.91
4	Miguel **VELOSO** (Por)	(29) 11.05.86

FORWARDS

22	Artem **KRAVETS**	(26) 03.06.89
11	Junior **MORAES** (Bra)	(28) 04.04.87
91	Lukasz **TEODORCZYK** (Pol)	(24) 03.06.91
10	Andriy **YARMOLENKO**	(25) 23.10.89

COACH

	Serhiy **REBROV**	(41) 03.06.74

GALATASARAY (Tur)

GOALKEEPERS

99	**CENK** Gonen	(27) 21.02.88
67	**ERAY** Iscan	(24) 19.07.91
1	Fernando **MUSLERA** (Uru)	(29) 16.06.86

DEFENDERS

23	Lionel **CAROLE** (Fra)	(24) 12.04.91
21	Aurelien **CHEDJOU** (Cam)	(30) 20.06.85
64	Jason **DENAYER** (Blg)	(20) 28.06.95
28	Koray **GUNTER** (Ger)	(21) 16.08.94
22	**HAKAN** Balta	(32) 23.03.83
55	**SABRI** Sarioglu	(31) 26.07.84
26	**SEMIH** Kaya	(24) 24.02.91
38	**TARIK** Camdal	(24) 24.03.91

MIDFIELDERS

4	Hamit **ALTINTOP**	(32) 08.12.82
5	**BILAL** Kisa	(32) 22.06.83
52	**EMRE** Colak	(24) 20.05.91
6	Jem **KARACAN**	(26) 21.02.89
29	**OLCAN** Adin	(29) 30.09.85
14	Jose **RODRIGUEZ** (Spa)	(20) 16.12.94
8	**SELCUK** Inan	(30) 10.02.85
10	Wesley **SNEIJDER** (Hol)	(31) 09.06.84
7	**YASIN** Oztekin	(28) 19.03.87

FORWARDS

17	**BURAK** Yilmaz	(30) 15.07.85
11	Lukas **PODOLSKI** (Ger)	(30) 04.06.85
18	**SINAN** Gumus	(21) 15.01.94
9	**UMUT** Bulut	(32) 15.03.83

COACH

	Hamza **HAMZAOGLU**	(45) 01.07.70

GENT (Blg)

GOALKEEPERS

1	Matz **SELS**	(23) 26.02.92
20	Yannick **THOELEN**	(25) 18.07.90
25	Brian **VANDENBUSSCHE**	(33) 24.09.81

DEFENDERS

5	Erik **JOHANSSON** (Swe)	(26) 30.12.88
13	Stefan **MITROVIC** (Ser)	(25) 22.05.90
23	Lasse **NIELSEN** (Den)	(27) 08.01.88
4	**RAFINHA** (Bra)	(33) 29.06.82
3	Uros **VITAS** (Ser)	(23) 06.07.92

MIDFIELDERS

21	Nana **ASARE** (Gha)	(29) 11.07.86
7	Kalifa **COULIBALY** (Mli)	(24) 21.08.91
19	Brecht **DEJAEGHERE**	(24) 29.05.91
32	Thomas **FOKET**	(20) 25.09.94
14	Sven **KUMS**	(27) 26.02.88
8	Thomas **MATTON**	(29) 24.10.85
77	Danjiel **MILICIEVIC** (Swi)	(29) 05.01.86
10	Renato **NETO** (Bra)	(23) 27.09.91
12	Marko **POLETANOVIC** (Ser)	(22) 20.07.93
15	Kenneth **SAIEF** (Isr)	(21) 17.12.93
17	Hannes **VAN DER BRUGGEN**	(22) 01.04.93

FORWARDS

9	Laurent **DEPOITRE**	(26) 07.12.88
28	Nicklas **PEDERSEN** (Den)	(27) 10.10.87
26	Benito **RAMAN**	(20) 07.11.94
27	Moses **SIMON** (Nga)	(20) 12.07.95

COACH

	Hein **VANHAEZEBROUCK**	(51) 16.02.64

JUVENTUS (Ita)

GOALKEEPERS

1	Gianluigi **BUFFON**	(37) 28.01.78
25	**NETO** (Bra)	(26) 19.07.89

DEFENDERS

15	Andrea **BARZAGLI**	(34) 08.05.81
19	Leonardo **BONUCCI**	(28) 01.05.87
4	Martin **CACERES** (Uru)	(28) 07.04.87
3	Giorgio **CHIELLINI**	(31) 14.08.84
33	Patrice **EVRA** (Fra)	(34) 15.05.81
26	Stephan **LICHTSTEINER** (Swi)	(31) 16.01.84
24	Daniele **RUGANI**	(21) 29.07.94
12	Alex **SANDRO** (Bra)	(24) 26.01.91

MIDFIELDERS

11	**HERNANES** (Bra)	(30) 29.05.85
6	Sami **KHEDIRA** (Ger)	(28) 04.04.87
18	Mario **LEMINA** (Gab)	(22) 01.09.93
8	Claudio **MARCHISIO**	(29) 19.01.86
10	Paul **POGBA** (Fra)	(22) 15.03.93
37	Roberto **PEREYRA** (Arg)	(24) 07.01.91
27	Stefano **STURARO**	(22) 09.03.93

FORWARDS

16	Juan **CUADRADO** (Col)	(27) 26.05.88
21	Paulo **DYBALA** (Arg)	(21) 15.11.93
17	Mario **MANDZUKIC** (Cro)	(29) 21.05.86
9	Alvaro **MORATA** (Spa)	(22) 23.10.92
7	Simone **ZAZA**	(24) 25.06.91

COACH

	Massimiliano **ALLEGRI**	(48) 11.08.67

(ages as of 15.09.15)

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE 2015-2016

LYON (Fra)

GOALKEEPERS

30	Mathieu **GORGELIN**	(25) 05.08.90
1	Anthony **LOPES** (Por)	(24) 01.10.90
16	Lucas **MOCIO**	(21) 11.05.94

DEFENDERS

3	Henri **BEDIMO** (Cam)	(31) 04.06.84
5	Milan **BISEVAC** (Ser)	(32) 31.08.83
41	Mouctar **DIAKHABY**	(18) 19.12.96
13	Christophe **JALLET**	(31) 31.10.83
4	Bakary **KONE** (BuF)	(27) 27.04.88
37	Dylan **MBOUMBOUNI**	(19) 20.02.96
15	Jeremy **MOREL**	(31) 02.04.84
44	Romaric **NGOUMA**	(20) 28.01.95
20	Rafael (**BRA**)	(25) 09.07.90
22	Lindsay **ROSE**	(23) 08.02.92
23	Samuel **UMTITI**	(21) 14.11.93
2	Mapou **YANGA-MBIWA**	(26) 15.05.89

MIDFIELDERS

54	Timothe **COGNAT**	(17) 25.01.98
14	Sergi **DARDER** (Spa)	(21) 22.12.93
18	Nabil **FEKIR**	(22) 18.07.93
12	Jordan **FERRI**	(23) 12.03.92
11	Rachid **GHEZZAL**	(23) 09.05.92
21	Maxime **GONALONS**	(26) 10.03.89
7	Clement **GRENIER**	(24) 07.01.91
24	Olivier **KEMEN**	(19) 20.07.96
32	Zakarie **LABIDI**	(20) 08.02.95
17	Steed **MALBRANQUE**	(35) 06.01.80
46	Christopher **MARTINS** (Lux)	(18) 19.02.97
28	Arnold **MVUEMBA**	(30) 28.01.85
8	Corentin **TOLISSO**	(21) 03.08.94
29	Lucas **TOUSART**	(18) 29.04.97

FORWARDS

9	Claudio **BEAUVUE**	(27) 16.04.88
27	Mawel **CORNET**	(18) 27.09.96
10	Alexandre **LACAZETTE**	(24) 28.05.91
39	Kilian **PAGLIUCA** (Swi)	(19) 02.09.96
19	Mathieu **VALBUENA**	(30) 28.09.84

COACH

Hubert **FOURNIER**	(48) 03.09.67

MACCABI TEL AVIV (Isr)

GOALKEEPERS

41	Sahar **HASSON**	(19) 24.04.96
1	Daniel **LIFSHITZ**	(27) 24.04.88
55	Haviv **OHAYON**	(17) 17.08.98
95	Predrag **RAJKOVIC** (Ser)	(19) 31.10.95

DEFENDERS

20	Omri **BEN HARUSH**	(25) 07.03.90
26	Tal **BEN HAIM I**	(33) 31.03.82
2	Eliazer **DASA**	(22) 03.12.92
31	Carlos **GARCIA** (Spa)	(31) 29.04.84
23	Sean **GOLDBERG**	(20) 13.06.95
27	Oz **RALY**	(27) 22.12.87
3	Yuval **SHPUNGIN**	(28) 03.04.87
18	Eytan **TIBI**	(27) 16.11.87
14	Yoav **ZIV**	(34) 16.03.81

MIDFIELDERS

6	Gal **ALBERMAN**	(32) 17.04.83
29	Suhail **ARMALY**	(19) 10.01.96
16	Shlomy **AZULAY**	(25) 30.03.90
17	Daniel **EINBINDER**	(26) 16.02.89
33	Dan **GLAZER**	(18) 20.09.96
40	Nosa **IGIEBOR** (Nga)	(24) 09.11.90
15	Dor **MIHA**	(23) 02.03.92
24	Nikola **MITROVIC** (Ser)	(28) 02.01.87
42	Dor **PERETZ**	(20) 17.05.95
22	Avraham **RIKAN**	(27) 10.09.88
28	Gil **VERMOUTH**	(30) 05.08.85
7	Eran **ZAHAVI**	(28) 25.07.87

FORWARDS

9	Eden **BEN BASAT**	(29) 08.09.86
11	Tal **BEN HAIM II**	(26) 05.08.89
10	Barak **ITZHAKI**	(30) 25.09.84
99	Dejan **RADONJIC** (Cro)	(25) 23.07.90

COACH

Slavisa **JOKANOVIC** (Ser)	(47) 16.08.68

MALMO (Swe)

GOALKEEPERS

29	Fredrik **ANDERSSON**	(26) 25.10.88
27	Zlatan **AZINOVIC**	(27) 31.01.88
30	Marko **JOHANSSON**	(17) 25.08.98
1	Johan **WILAND**	(34) 24.01.81

DEFENDERS

21	Kari **ARNASON** (Isr)	(32) 13.10.82
17	Rasmus **BENGTSSON**	(29) 26.06.86
31	Franz **BRORSSON**	(19) 30.01.96
25	Felipe **CARVALHO** (Uru)	(21) 18.09.93
2	Pa **KONATE**	(21) 25.04.94
24	Mahmut **OZEN**	(27) 01.09.88
3	Anton **TINNERHOLM**	(24) 26.02.91
26	Andreas **VINDHEIM** (Nor)	(20) 04.08.95
13	Yoshimar **YOTUN** (Per)	(25) 07.04.90

MIDFIELDERS

8	Enoch **ADU** (Gha)	(25) 14.09.90
14	Erik **ANDERSSON**	(18) 03.05.97
15	Pawel **CIBICKI**	(21) 09.01.94
19	Magnus **EIKREM** (Nor)	(25) 08.08.90
7	Simon **KROON**	(22) 16.06.93
6	Oscar **LEWICKI**	(23) 14.07.92
10	Guillermo **MOLINS**	(26) 26.09.88
5	Erdal **RAKIP**	(19) 13.02.96
20	Vladimir **RODIC** (Ser)	(22) 07.09.93
32	Mattias **SVANBERG**	(16) 05.01.99

FORWARDS

23	Jo Inge **BERGET** (Nor)	(25) 11.09.90
28	Nikola **DJURDJIC** (Ser)	(29) 01.04.86
11	Agon **MEHMETI**	(25) 20.11.89
9	Markus **ROSENBERG**	(32) 27.09.82
22	Tobias **SANA**	(26) 11.07.89

COACH

Age **HAREIDE** (Nor)	(61) 23.09.53

MANCHESTER CITY (Eng)

GOALKEEPERS

13	Willy **CABALLERO** (Arg)	(33) 28.09.81
1	Joe **HART**	(28) 19.04.87

DEFENDERS

22	Gael **CLICHY** (Fra)	(30) 26.07.85
26	Martin **DEMICHELIS** (Arg)	(34) 20.12.80
11	Aleksandar **KOLAROV** (Ser)	(29) 10.11.85
4	Vincent **KOMPANY** (Blg)	(29) 10.04.86
20	Eliaquim **MANGALA** (Fra)	(24) 13.02.91
30	Nicolas **OTAMENDI** (Arg)	(27) 12.02.88
3	Bacary **SAGNA** (Fra)	(32) 14.02.83
5	Pablo **ZABALETA** (Arg)	(30) 16.01.85

MIDFIELDERS

18	Fabian **DELPH**	(25) 21.11.89
25	**FERNANDINHO** (Bra)	(30) 04.05.85
6	**FERNANDO** (Bra)	(28) 25.07.87
8	Samir **NASRI** (Fra)	(28) 26.06.87
15	Jesus **NAVAS** (Spa)	(29) 21.11.85
21	David **SILVA** (Spa)	(29) 08.01.86
42	Yaya **TOURE** (IvC)	(32) 13.05.83

FORWARDS

10	Sergio **AGUERO** (Arg)	(27) 02.06.88
14	Wilfried **BONY** (IvC)	(26) 10.12.88
17	Kevin **DE BRUYNE** (Blg)	(24) 28.06.91
7	Raheem **STERLING**	(20) 08.12.94

MANAGER

Manuel **PELLEGRINI** (Chl)	(61) 16.09.53

PSV (Hol)

GOALKEEPERS

21	Luuk **KOOPMANS**	(21) 18.11.93
22	Remko **PASVEER**	(31) 08.11.83
1	Jeroen **ZOET**	(24) 06.01.91

DEFENDERS

33	Suently **ALBERTO**	(19) 09.06.96
4	Santiago **ARIAS** (Col)	(23) 13.01.92
20	Joshua **BRENET**	(21) 20.03.94
5	Jeffrey **BRUMA**	(23) 13.11.91
30	Jordy **DE WIJS**	(20) 08.01.95
29	Jorrit **HENDRIX**	(20) 06.02.95
2	Nicolas **ISIMAT-MIRIN** (Fra)	(23) 15.11.91
25	Menno **KOCH**	(21) 02.07.94
3	Hector **MORENO** (Mex)	(27) 17.01.88
14	Simon **POULSEN** (Den)	(30) 07.10.84
15	Jetro **WILLEMS**	(21) 30.03.94

MIDFIELDERS

18	Andres **GUARDADO** (Mex)	(28) 28.09.86
10	Adam **MAHER**	(22) 20.07.93
7	Gaston **PEREIRO** (Uru)	(20) 11.06.95
6	Davy **PROPPER**	(24) 02.09.91
8	Stijn **SCHAARS**	(31) 11.01.84
23	Rai **VLOET**	(20) 08.05.95

FORWARDS

9	Luuk **DE JONG**	(25) 27.08.90
17	Florian **JOZEFZOON**	(24) 09.02.91
16	Maxime **LESTIENNE** (Blg)	(23) 17.06.92
19	Jurgen **LOCADIA**	(21) 07.11.93
11	Luciano **NARSINGH**	(25) 13.09.90

COACH

Phillip **COCU**	(44) 29.10.70

REAL MADRID (Spa)

GOALKEEPERS

13	Kiko **CASILLA**	(28) 02.10.86
1	Keylor **NAVAS** (CR)	(28) 15.12.86
31	Ruben **YANEZ**	(21) 12.10.93

DEFENDERS

30	**ABNER** (Bra)	(19) 30.05.96
17	Alvaro **ARBELOA**	(32) 17.01.83
15	Dani **CARVAJAL**	(23) 11.01.92
23	**DANILO** (Bra)	(24) 15.07.91
12	**MARCELO** (Bra)	(27) 12.05.88
6	**NACHO**	(25) 18.01.90
3	**PEPE** (Por)	(32) 26.02.83
4	Sergio **RAMOS**	(29) 30.03.86
2	Raphael **VARANE** (Fra)	(22) 25.04.93

MIDFIELDERS

11	Gareth **BALE** (Wal)	(26) 16.07.89
14	**CASEMIRO** (Bra)	(23) 23.02.92
21	Denis **CHERYSHEV** (Rus)	(24) 26.12.90
22	**ISCO**	(23) 21.04.92
16	Mateo **KOVACIC** (Cro)	(21) 06.05.94
8	Toni **KROOS** (Ger)	(25) 04.01.90
28	Marcos **LLORENTE**	(20) 30.01.95
19	Luka **MODRIC** (Cro)	(30) 09.09.85
27	Martin **ODEGAARD** (Nor)	(16) 17.12.98
10	James **RODRIGUEZ** (Col)	(24) 12.07.91
18	Lucas **VAZQUEZ**	(24) 01.07.91

FORWARDS

9	Karim **BENZEMA** (Fra)	(27) 19.12.87
20	**JESE**	(22) 26.02.93
29	Borja **MAYORAL**	(18) 05.04.97
7	Cristiano **RONALDO** (Por)	(30) 05.02.85

COACH

Rafael **BENITEZ**	(55) 16.04.60

ROMA (Ita)

GOALKEEPERS

26	Morgan **DE SANCTIS**	(38) 26.03.77
98	Lorenzo **CRISANTO**	(17) 20.04.98
25	Wojciech **SZCZESNY** (Pol)	(25) 18.04.90

DEFENDERS

95	Elio **CAPRADOSSI**	(19) 11.03.96
5	Leandro **CASTAN** (Bra)	(28) 05.11.86
3	Lucas **DIGNE** (Fra)	(22) 20.07.93
13	**MAICON** (Bra)	(34) 26.07.81
44	Kostas **MANOLAS** (Gre)	(24) 14.06.91
91	Riccardo **MARCHIZZA**	(17) 26.03.98
2	Antonio **RUDIGER** (Ger)	(22) 03.03.93
35	Vasilis **TOROSIDIS** (Gre)	(30) 10.06.85

MIDFIELDERS

16	Daniele **DE ROSSI**	(32) 24.07.83
52	Lorenzo **DI LIVIO**	(18) 11.01.97
53	Christian **D'URSO**	(18) 26.07.97
14	Iago **FALQUE** (Spa)	(25) 04.01.90
24	Alessandro **FLORENZI**	(24) 11.03.91
7	Juan Manuel **ITURBE** (Par)	(22) 04.06.93
20	Seydou **KEITA** (Mli)	(35) 16.01.80
4	Radja **NAINGGOLAN** (Blg)	(27) 04.05.88
15	Miralem **PJANIC** (Bos)	(25) 02.04.90
48	Salih **UCAN** (Tur)	(21) 06.01.94
21	William **VAINQUEUR** (Fra)	(26) 19.11.88

FORWARDS

9	Edin **DZEKO** (Bos)	(29) 17.03.86
27	**GERVINHO** (IvC)	(28) 27.05.87
11	Mohamed **SALAH** (Egy)	(23) 15.06.92
92	Edoardo **SOLERI**	(17) 19.10.97
10	Francesco **TOTTI**	(38) 27.09.76
93	Marco **TUMMINELLO**	(16) 06.11.98

COACH

Rudi **GARCIA** (Fra)	(51) 20.02.64

SEVILLA (Spa)

GOALKEEPERS

1	Sergio **RICO**	(22) 01.09.93
35	Alvaro **RODRIGUEZ**	(17) 18.02.98
31	David **SORIA**	(22) 04.04.93
33	Juan **SORIANO**	(18) 23.08.97

DEFENDERS

17	Marco **ANDREOLLI** (Ita)	(29) 10.06.86
26	David **CARMONA**	(18) 11.01.97
23	**COKE**	(28) 26.04.87
18	Sergio **ESCUDERO**	(26) 02.09.89
25	Mariano **FERREIRA** (Bra)	(29) 23.06.86
5	Timothee **KOLODZIEJCZAK** (Fra)	(23) 01.10.91
29	Jose **MATOS**	(20) 06.05.95
3	Adil **RAMI** (Fra)	(29) 27.12.85
2	Benoit **TREMOULINAS** (Fra)	(29) 28.12.85

MIDFIELDERS

19	Ever **BANEGA** (Arg)	(27) 20.06.88
6	Daniel **CARRICO** (Por)	(27) 04.08.88
27	Antonio **COTAN**	(19) 19.05.96
14	Sebastian **CRISTOFORO** (Uru)	(22) 23.08.93
8	Vicente **IBORRA**	(27) 16.01.88
12	Gael **KAKUTA** (Fra)	(24) 21.06.91
22	Yevhen **KONOPLYANKA** (Ukr)	(25) 29.09.89
7	Michael **KROHN-DEHLI** (Den)	(32) 06.06.83
4	Grzegorz **KRYCHOWIAK** (Pol)	(25) 29.01.90
16	**LUISMI**	(23) 05.05.92
15	Steven **N'ZONZI** (Fra)	(26) 15.12.88
10	Jose Antonio **REYES**	(32) 01.09.83
20	**VITOLO**	(25) 02.11.89

FORWARDS

28	Carlos **FERNANDEZ**	(19) 22.05.96
9	Kevin **GAMEIRO** (Fra)	(28) 09.05.87
11	Ciro **IMMOBILE** (Ita)	(25) 20.02.90
24	Fernando **LLORENTE**	(30) 26.02.85
30	Juan **MUNOZ**	(19) 12.11.95

COACH

Unai **EMERY**	(43) 03.11.71

MANCHESTER UTD (Eng)

GOALKEEPERS

1	David **DE GEA** (Spa)	(24) 07.11.90
50	Sam **JOHNSTONE**	(22) 25.03.93
20	Sergio **ROMERO** (Arg)	(28) 22.02.87

DEFENDERS

36	Matteo **DARMIAN** (Ita)	(25) 02.12.89
4	Phil **JONES**	(23) 21.02.92
33	Paddy **MCNAIR** (NI)	(20) 27.04.95
5	Marcos **ROJO** (Arg)	(25) 20.03.90
23	Luke **SHAW**	(20) 12.07.95
12	Chris **SMALLING**	(25) 22.11.89
30	Guillermo **VARELA** (Uru)	(22) 24.03.93

MIDFIELDERS

17	Daley **BLIND** (Hol)	(25) 09.03.90
16	Michael **CARRICK**	(34) 28.07.81
27	Marouane **FELLAINI** (Blg)	(27) 22.11.87
21	Ander **HERRERA** (Spa)	(26) 14.08.89
35	Jesse **LINGARD**	(22) 15.12.92
8	Juan **MATA** (Spa)	(27) 28.04.88
44	Andreas **PEREIRA** (Blg)	(19) 01.01.96
22	Nick **POWELL**	(21) 23.03.94
28	Morgan **SCHNEIDERLIN** (Fra)	(25) 08.11.89
31	Bastian **SCHWEINSTEIGER** (Ger)	(31) 01.08.84
25	Antonio **VALENCIA** (Ecu)	(30) 04.08.85
18	Ashley **YOUNG**	(30) 09.07.85

FORWARDS

7	Memphis **DEPAY** (Hol)	(21) 13.02.94
9	Anthony **MARTIAL** (Fra)	(19) 05.12.95
10	Wayne **ROONEY**	(29) 24.10.85
19	James **WILSON**	(19) 01.12.95

MANAGER

Louis **VAN GAAL** (Hol)		(64) 08.08.51

OLYMPIAKOS (Gre)

GOALKEEPERS

33	Lefteris **CHOUTESIOTIS**	(21) 20.07.94
37	Stefanos **KAPINO**	(21) 18.03.94
16	**ROBERTO** (Spa)	(29) 10.02.86

DEFENDERS

3	Alberto **BOTIA** (Spa)	(26) 27.01.89
6	Manuel **DA COSTA** (Mor)	(29) 06.05.86
14	Omar **ELABDELLAOUI** (Nor)	(23) 05.12.91
2	Giannis **MANIATIS**	(28) 12.10.86
26	Arthur **MASUAKU** (Fra)	(21) 07.11.93
34	Manolis **SALIAKAS**	(19) 12.09.96
30	Leandro **SALINO** (Bra)	(30) 22.04.85
23	Dimitris **SIOVAS**	(26) 16.09.88
29	Praxitelis **VOUROS**	(20) 05.05.95

MIDFIELDERS

8	Andreas **BOUCHALAKIS**	(22) 05.04.93
91	Esteban **CAMBIASSO** (Arg)	(35) 18.08.80
10	Alejandro **DOMINGUEZ** (Arg)	(34) 10.06.81
7	Kostas **FORTOUNIS**	(22) 16.10.92
11	Pajtim **KASAMI** (Swi)	(23) 02.06.92
15	Qazim **LACI** (Alb)	(19) 19.01.96
5	Luka **MILIVOJEVIC** (Ser)	(24) 07.04.91

FORWARDS

9	Alfred **FINNBOGASON** (Ice)	(26) 01.02.89
77	**HERNANI** (Por)	(24) 20.08.91
99	Brown **IDEYE** (Nga)	(26) 10.10.88
90	Felipe **PARDO** (Col)	(25) 17.08.90
17	Alan **PULIDO** (Mex)	(24) 08.03.91
92	**SEBA** (Bra)	(23) 08.06.92

COACH

Marco **SILVA** (Por)		(38) 12.07.77

PARIS ST-GERMAIN (Fra)

GOALKEEPERS

1	Nicolas **DOUCHEZ**	(35) 22.04.80
30	Salvatore **SIRIGU** (Ita)	(28) 12.01.87
16	Kevin **TRAPP** (Ger)	(25) 08.07.90

DEFENDERS

19	Serge **AURIER** (IvC)	(22) 24.12.92
3	Presnel **KIMPEMBE**	(20) 13.08.95
20	Layvin **KURZAWA**	(23) 04.09.92
32	David **LUIZ** (Bra)	(28) 22.04.87
5	**MARQUINHOS** (Bra)	(21) 14.05.94
17	**MAXWELL** (Bra)	(34) 27.08.81
2	Thiago **SILVA** (Bra)	(30) 22.09.84
23	Gregory **VAN DER WIEL** (Hol)	(27) 03.02.88

MIDFIELDERS

11	Angel **DI MARIA** (Arg)	(27) 14.02.88
7	**LUCAS** (Bra)	(23) 13.08.92
14	Blaise **MATUIDI**	(28) 09.04.87
8	Thiago **MOTTA** (Ita)	(33) 28.08.82
27	Javier **PASTORE** (Arg)	(26) 20.06.89
25	Adrien **RABIOT**	(20) 03.04.95
4	Benjamin **STAMBOULI**	(25) 13.08.90
6	Marco **VERRATTI**	(22) 05.11.92

FORWARDS

29	Jean-Kevin **AUGUSTIN**	(18) 16.06.97
9	Edinson **CAVANI** (Uru)	(28) 14.02.87
10	Zlatan **IBRAHIMOVIC** (Swe)	(33) 03.10.81
22	Ezequiel **LAVEZZI** (Arg)	(30) 03.05.85

COACH

Laurent **BLANC**		(49) 19.11.65

PORTO (Por)

GOALKEEPERS

91	Andre **CAIO**	(21) 23.02.94
12	Iker **CASILLAS** (Spa)	(34) 20.05.81
41	Joao **COSTA**	(19) 02.02.96
1	**HELTON** (Bra)	(37) 18.05.78

DEFENDERS

28	Aly **CISSOKHO** (Fra)	(28) 15.09.87
72	**FERNANDO**	(18) 14.03.97
64	**JORGE**	(18) 02.04.97
21	Miguel **LAYUN** (Mex)	(27) 25.06.88
4	**MAICON** (Bra)	(27) 14.09.88
5	Ivan **MARCANO** (Spa)	(28) 23.06.87
3	Bruno **MARTINS INDI** (Hol)	(23) 08.02.92
2	Maxi **PEREIRA** (Uru)	(31) 08.06.84
55	**RAFA**	(20) 09.05.95

MIDFIELDERS

20	Andre **ANDRE**	(26) 26.08.89
8	Yacine **BRAHIMI** (Alg)	(25) 08.02.90
22	**DANILO**	(24) 09.09.91
15	**EVANDRO** (Bra)	(29) 23.08.86
50	Joao **GRACA**	(20) 18.06.95
16	Hector **HERRERA** (Mex)	(25) 19.04.90
25	Giannelli **IMBULA** (Fra)	(23) 12.09.92
6	Ruben **NEVES**	(18) 13.03.97
13	Sergio **OLIVEIRA**	(23) 02.06.92
56	Tomas **PODSTAWSKI**	(20) 30.01.95
48	Francisco **RAMOS**	(20) 10.04.95

FORWARDS

9	Vincent **ABOUBAKAR** (Cam)	(23) 22.01.92
23	Alberto **BUENO** (Spa)	(27) 20.03.88
17	Jesus **CORONA** (Mex)	(22) 06.01.93
77	Ruben **MACEDO**	(19) 09.03.96
10	Pablo **OSVALDO** (Ita)	(29) 12.01.86
19	Andre **SILVA**	(19) 06.11.95
11	Cristian **TELLO** (Spa)	(24) 11.08.91
7	Silvestre **VARELA**	(30) 02.02.85

COACH

Julen **LOPETEGUI** (Spa)		(49) 28.08.66

SHAKHTAR DONETSK (Ukr)

GOALKEEPERS

32	Anton **KANIBOLOTSKIY**	(27) 16.05.88
30	Andriy **PYATOV**	(31) 28.06.84
23	Bohdan **SARNAVSKIY**	(20) 29.01.95

DEFENDERS

66	Marcio **AZEVEDO** (Bra)	(29) 05.02.86
31	**ISMAILY** (Bra)	(25) 11.01.90
38	Serhiy **KRYVTSOV**	(24) 15.03.91
5	Olexandr **KUCHER**	(32) 22.10.82
25	Mykola **MATVIYENKO**	(19) 02.05.96
18	Ivan **ORDETS**	(23) 08.07.92
44	Yaroslav **RAKITSKIY**	(26) 03.08.89
13	Vyacheslav **SHEVCHUK**	(36) 13.05.79
33	Darijo **SRNA** (Cro)	(33) 01.05.82

MIDFIELDERS

10	**BERNARD** (Bra)	(23) 08.09.92
9	**DENTINHO** (Bra)	(26) 19.01.89
8	**FRED** (Bra)	(22) 05.03.93
14	Vasyl **KOBIN**	(30) 24.05.85
74	Viktor **KOVALENKO**	(19) 14.02.96
17	Maksym **MALYSHEV**	(22) 24.12.92
11	**MARLOS** (Bra)	(27) 07.06.88
7	Wellington **NEM** (Bra)	(23) 06.02.92
6	Taras **STEPANENKO**	(26) 08.08.89
28	**TAISON** (Bra)	(27) 13.01.88
29	Alex **TEIXEIRA** (Bra)	(25) 06.01.90

FORWARDS

22	**EDUARDO** (Cro)	(32) 25.02.83
19	Facundo **FERREYRA** (Arg)	(24) 14.03.91
21	Olexandr **GLADKIY**	(28) 24.08.87
24	Serhiy **GRYN**	(21) 06.06.94

COACH

Mircea **LUCESCU** (Rom)		(70) 29.07.45

VALENCIA (Spa)

GOALKEEPERS

24	Jaume **DOMENECH**	(24) 05.11.90
25	Mathew **RYAN** (Aus)	(23) 08.04.92
35	Antonio **SIVERA**	(19) 11.08.96
13	**YOEL**	(27) 28.08.88

DEFENDERS

23	Aymen **ABDENNOUR** (Tun)	(26) 06.08.89
19	Antonio **BARRAGAN**	(28) 12.06.87
2	Joao **CANCELO** (Por)	(21) 27.05.94
14	Jose **GAYA**	(20) 25.05.95
36	Antonio **LATORRE**	(17) 21.11.97
5	Shkodran **MUSTAFI** (Ger)	(23) 17.04.92
6	Lucas **ORBAN**	(26) 03.02.89
4	Aderlan **SANTOS** (Bra)	(26) 09.04.89
3	Ruben **VEZO** (Por)	(21) 25.04.94

MIDFIELDERS

12	Danilo **BARBOSA** (Bra)	(19) 28.02.96
20	Rodrigo **DE PAUL** (Arg)	(21) 24.05.94
8	Sofiane **FEGHOULI** (Alg)	(25) 26.12.89
18	Javi **FUEGO**	(31) 04.01.84
33	Nacho **GIL**	(20) 09.09.95
21	Andre **GOMES** (Por)	(22) 30.07.93
10	Daniel **PAREJO**	(26) 16.04.89
15	Enzo **PEREZ** (Arg)	(29) 22.02.86
28	**TROPI**	(20) 12.05.95
30	Fran **VILLALBA**	(17) 11.05.98

FORWARDS

9	Paco **ALCACER**	(22) 30.08.93
22	Santi **MINA**	(19) 07.12.95
7	Alvaro **NEGREDO**	(30) 20.08.85
34	Andres **PASCUAL**	(18) 18.11.96
11	Pablo **PIATTI** (Arg)	(26) 31.03.89
17	**RODRIGO**	(24) 06.03.91

COACH

NUNO (Por)		(41) 25.01.74

WOLFSBURG (Ger)

GOALKEEPERS

1	Diego **BENAGLIO** (Swi)	(32) 08.09.83
28	Koen **CASTEELS** (Blg)	(23) 25.06.92
20	Max **GRUN**	(28) 05.04.87

DEFENDERS

6	Carlos **ASCUES** (Per)	(23) 19.06.92
18	**DANTE** (Bra)	(31) 18.10.83
24	Sebastian **JUNG**	(25) 22.06.90
5	Timm **KLOSE** (Swi)	(27) 09.05.88
31	Robin **KNOCHE**	(23) 22.05.92
25	**NALDO** (Bra)	(33) 10.09.82
34	Ricardo **RODRIGUEZ** (Swi)	(23) 25.08.92
4	Marcel **SCHAFER**	(31) 07.06.84
37	Moritz **SPRENGER**	(20) 22.02.95

MIDFIELDERS

27	Maximilian **ARNOLD**	(21) 27.05.94
7	Daniel **CALIGIURI**	(27) 15.01.88
10	Julian **DRAXLER**	(21) 20.09.93
23	Josuha **GUILAVOGUI** (Fra)	(24) 19.09.90
22	Luiz **GUSTAVO** (Bra)	(28) 23.07.87
35	Francisco **RODRIGUEZ** (Swi)	(20) 14.09.95
30	Paul **SEGUIN**	(20) 29.03.95
15	Christian **TRASCH**	(28) 01.09.87
8	**VIEIRINHA** (Por)	(29) 24.01.86

FORWARDS

3	Nicklas **BENDTNER** (Den)	(27) 16.01.88
12	Bas **DOST** (Hol)	(26) 31.05.89
11	Max **KRUSE**	(27) 19.03.88
17	Andre **SCHURRLE**	(24) 06.11.90
33	Sebastian **STOLZE**	(20) 29.01.95

COACH

Dieter **HECKING**		(51) 12.09.64

ZENIT (Rus)

GOALKEEPERS

41	Mikhail **KERZHAKOV**	(28) 28.01.87
1	Yuri **LODYGIN**	(25) 26.05.90
16	Vyacheslav **MALAFEEV**	(36) 04.03.79
51	Maksim **RUDAKOV**	(19) 22.01.96

DEFENDERS

2	Aleksandr **ANYUKOV**	(32) 28.09.82
4	Domenico **CRISCITO** (Ita)	(28) 30.12.86
24	Ezequiel **GARAY** (Arg)	(28) 10.10.86
52	Andrei **IVANOV**	(21) 02.09.94
53	Ivan **IVANIDI**	(19) 14.06.96
50	Maksim **KARPOV**	(20) 17.03.95
6	Nicolas **LOMBAERTS** (Blg)	(30) 20.03.85
13	Luis **NETO** (Por)	(27) 26.05.88
62	Stepan **REBENKO**	(20) 01.05.95
19	Igor **SMOLNIKOV**	(27) 08.08.88
58	Ilya **ZUEV**	(21) 25.01.94

MIDFIELDERS

10	**DANNY** (Por)	(32) 07.08.83
94	Aleksei **EVSEEV**	(21) 30.03.94
20	Viktor **FAYZULIN**	(29) 22.04.86
21	Javi **GARCIA** (Spa)	(28) 08.02.87
73	Pavel **OSIPOV**	(19) 28.01.96
5	Aleksandr **RYAZANTSEV**	(29) 05.09.86
17	Oleg **SHATOV**	(25) 29.07.90
79	Konstantin **TROYANOV**	(19) 18.11.95
28	Axel **WITSEL** (Blg)	(26) 12.01.89
65	Danila **YASCHUK**	(20) 13.03.95
14	Artur **YUSUPOV**	(26) 01.09.89

FORWARDS

70	Dmitri **BOGAEV**	(21) 24.01.94
22	Artem **DZYUBA**	(27) 22.08.88
7	**HULK** (Bra)	(29) 25.07.86
76	Pavel **KIREENKO**	(21) 14.06.94
89	Evgeni **MARKOV**	(21) 07.07.94
43	Pavel **NAZIMOV**	(19) 04.02.96

COACH

Andre **VILLAS-BOAS** (Por)		(37) 17.10.77

(ages as of 15.09.15)

World Soccer's GREAT MATCHES

JUNE 30, 1954, LAUSANNE: WORLD CUP SEMI-FINAL

Hungary 4 Uruguay 2

For many, this semi-final showdown between two of the world's footballing greats was the finest match of all time

Under pressure...Hungary keeper Gyula Grosics clears

The "Mighty Magyars" of Ferenc Puskas, Nandor Hidegkuti and Sandor Kocsis were considered the best team on the planet when Olympic champions Hungary met World Cup holders Uruguay in the 1954 semi-finals in Switzerland.

The South Americans, who were playing on European soil for the first time, had never lost a World Cup game before. But without their captain, Obdulio Varela, they found themselves trailing early in the second half to goals from Zoltan Czibor and Hidegkuti.

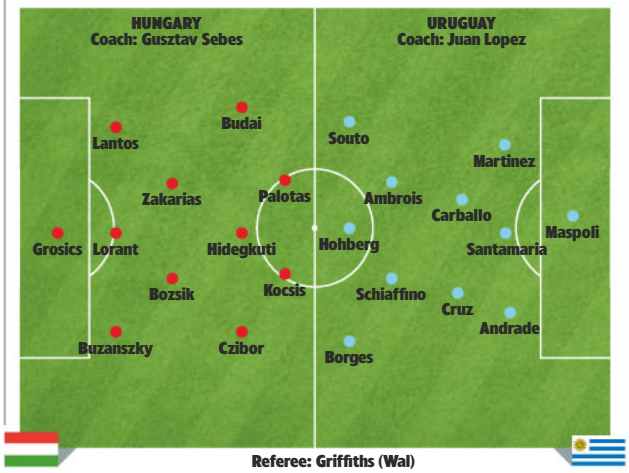
The Hungarian trio of Czibor, Hidegkuti and Peter Palotas – who was playing in the absence of the injured Puskas – exchanged passes with precision and intricacy as events unfolded at a frantic pace. And Laszlo Budai, who replaced the injured Jozsef Toth, produced crosses of the highest quality throughout the game as chance after chance was created.

However, with Juan Schiaffino pulling the strings for the South Americans, Uruguay hit back with two goals from the naturalised Argentinian Juan Hohberg in the final quarter of an hour to take the game into extra time.

It took two headers from Kocsis in the last half hour to seal victory in what Hungarian half-back Joszef Bozsik would later call "the most beautiful, the most humane match of my life".

Acrobatic...Sandor Kocsis

In the Final, Hungary met West Germany, who they had put eight goals past in the group stage, and with Puskas back in the starting line-up they raced into a 2-0 lead within eight minutes. But the Germans produced a stunning comeback to win 3-2 in a game that was to become known as "the Miracle of Berne". WS



Referee: Griffiths (Wal)

KEY MOMENTS

Opener...Zoltan Czibor celebrates his goal

12min Nandor Hidegkuti chips the ball into the Uruguay penalty area, Sandor Kocsis heads it on and Zoltan Czibor shoot pasts Roque Maspoli. **1-0**

47min Hidegkuti throws himself at a deep cross to the far post from Laszlo Budai and heads home, despite being under pressure. **2-0**

75min Uruguay break from inside their own half and some neat passing is finished off when Juan Hohberg wrong foots Hungarian goalkeeper Gyula Grosics with a low shot inside the near post. **2-1**

87min Hohberg rounds Grosics before shooting between defenders Jeno Buzansky and Mihaly Lantos on the goalline to draw Uruguay level, but then faints after celebrating team-mates jump on top of him. **2-2**

Passed out...Juan Hohberg faints

109min Budai crosses from the right and Kocsis outjumps Jose Santamaria to direct a header into the top corner to restore Hungary's lead. **3-2**

117min Kocsis, at the far post, again gets to a cross, this time from Jozsef Bozsik and Maspoli is beaten with a low header into the bottom corner of the net. **4-2**

Going ahead...Nandor Hidegkuti makes it 2-0

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